REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH LCMS

SHELTER



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Redeemer <u>Reflection</u> Newsletter

Loving People To Christ

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REDEEMER REFLECTION

From the Interim Vacancy Pastor's Desk



Pastor Carl Bassett



wondrous benefits we have in God our Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ. What do we have to fear on this earth? Nothing! In Christ, we are forever kept in the shelter and safety of God's almighty hands.

We are promised, "Surely He will save you from the fowler's snare

SHELTER

¹Whoever dwells in the **shelter** of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. ²I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." ³Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. ⁴He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. ⁵You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, ⁶nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.

Psalm 91:1-6

Dear Family in Christ,

Psalm 91, this joyous psalm of praise, enthusiastically proclaims the

and from the deadly pestilence." Appropriate words that encourage us, especially as we navigate through this COVID-19 world. Our Mighty Lord clearly reminds us that we need not fear the attacks of the Devil or the trickery of his servants. Though our enemies craft their unholy plans against us, God's hand of protection powerfully shelters us and keeps us from being destroyed by their wicked schemes and ways. A Mighty Fortress is our God, indeed!

We need not fear the shattering, threatening news of illness and disease. Does that mean that Christians never become ill? Of course not! What it does mean is that every moment of our lives we are safely sheltered under His wings; He shall cover us with His strong arms, or poetically spoken, His "feathers." Even when sickness comes upon us, we know that God is with us to help us endure. Our Father can bring good even out of the worst situation. Maybe that illness will strengthen our faith in Him, drawing us closer to Him, or in the end, it may even be the means He will use to bring us home to Him. Either way, we need not fear, for our God is sheltering us, or we will be at last forever in His arms of love.

Our text further reminds us that there is no terror that we need fear not *"terrors in the night or arrows in the day."* That means, at a time when the whole world seems to be filled with instability, riots, destruction, illness, and unrest, the Christian can go calmly but cautiously on his or her way. What can possibly happen next? What calamity lies crouching just over the horizon? Folks, it really matters not, for nothing—absolutely nothing—can separate us from our Heavenly Father and His sheltering, comforting love and presence.

Never forget God rules over everything. No nation or individual,



whether they love or hate God, live apart from His mighty hand of power. Truly we can safely trust in God for all things, for His justice is righteous and pure. He is not bought nor influenced by the evil plans of Satan or men. He gives no favor to the rich nor does He neglect the poor—all stand before Him equally. Why would we not trust God? Why would we desire anything besides Him? For those who love Him, how sweet is the joyous communion—relationship we have with Him. Dear family, as we look back over our lives, we know "burning bush" experiences have appeared when we find ourselves intimately walking in sweet communion with Christ—those special times when the fire of His love and compassion overcomes even our very souls, warming our hearts, calming our minds.

So in these troubling days, continue to walk with Jesus, and cry out to Him to rescue us from the evils of sin and death that seem to be overwhelming us and our world. By His grace, we will enter into His courts of joy and peace, and He shall deliver us from the sins which so easily beset us and attempt to destroy our communion with Him.

There is no greater joy than staying connected to our dear Lord! May He continue to shelter us and give us rest, hope, and His everlasting peace!

Peace and Love, in Christ our Savior!



Yes! VBS is coming to Redeemer in July. It will be held on 4 consecutive evenings, July 27-30, 6:00—7:45 p.m. Things may change in these strange times, but we're looking forward to this annually awaited fun learning opportunity for children.

Registration can be done online. People may also phone the church office, 517-750-3100, to sign children up for VBS.

The office is now open 8:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m., unless orders from the Governor's office dictates otherwise.



BETHEL SERIES FINALE

The Bethel Series will attempt to finish the last six weeks of Year #1, beginning on Thursday, June 25, from 6:30-9:00 p.m., with physical distancing being observed, in the adult classroom in the lower level of the church.

Classes will continue in July on Thursday evenings through the end of July: 7/2, 7/9, 7/16, 7/23, and 7/30. We may attempt a Saturday or two in July if class members decide they want to do a couple units at a time.

TOPIC FOR AUGUST

The topic for August is *Bend.* 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. What can you share that will show God working in your life or reflect Him to those around you?

Please consider sharing personal stories of how you have seen or felt God working in your life, especially during these unusual circumstances associated with our time of "sheltering in place" during this pandemic.

Articles on the topics of Family, Prayer, and Outreach are always welcome, as are other aspects of the Christian life. Please also share situations that can or have influenced your faith and how we can worship Him with and through our lives in this time and place.

Send articles or information to <u>bennitt49@yahoo.com</u>, 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. I appreciate and consider all submissions.



ANNUAL RUMMAGE SALE CANCELLED

The Annual Redeemer Rummage Sale has been cancelled for this year. Because of the need to be in close contact in order to set up for and serve customers during the sale, and the difficulties involved in sustaining distancing throughout such an event, we have decided to forego the sale in 2020. Next year's sale will depend on the health requirements and status at that time. We are sorry for any inconvenience this has caused, but please do not bring in any more items for the sale as we have very limited storage and no clear plans for next year.

Thank you all for your cooperation and for the support given throughout the past years of this event.



JULY

HAVE MERCY

by Kristin Rathje, one of our guest writers, shares selections / excerpts from her Blog, *Next Chapter*; used with permission. https://kristinsnextchapter.com/author/krathje 66/

...l've heard the story of "The Good Samaritan" countless times in my fiftyplus years. You know the one, the guy is traveling down a road when he is attacked by robbers and left for dead. He's lying mangled in the dirt, gasping for breath, hoping against all hope that someone will stop and help him.

One of our pastors...recalled with us the tragedies of the last week, month, year, years, and asked us the question, "What does it mean for us? for the church? Who is our neighbor and how are we to treat him?"

Let me just go on record here and say that in the past weeks and months I have NOT immediately gone to that question as I've witnessed all kinds of horrendous acts. I have been more often found standing in front of the television, eyes wide, saying, "What the..."

It doesn't take me long to launch into the words I used to hear my grandparents say, "What's the world coming to?" From there it's just a short trip to quoting scripture about the end times and "wars and rumors of wars"...I'm not really looking for what it means for me, or, to be honest, for ways that I could possibly help.

This morning, our pastor in his retelling of "The Good Samaritan" flipped the script for me. He said that like the man in the story, each of us is essentially half-dead, lying in the dirt, gasping for breath. He said, "*Jesus* is the good Samaritan."



Gasp! How did I get fifty years into my life and not realize that the point of the story is *not* that I would see myself as the Good Samaritan and look for ways that I can be better than the priests and the Levites and actually help out the poor hurting soul? How have I not seen that I am the poor hurting soul!?!

Jesus was telling this story to a respected expert in the law. The expert had asked him, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" He, of course, knew what was written, *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind and love your neighbor as yourself."* He just needed a little clarification. "Uh, Jesus, who, uh, exactly, would you say qualifies as 'my neighbor'?"

Can't you just see Jesus inhaling slowly, thinking to Himself, "This one is gonna take a story." He doesn't just say, "Every living human, you moron!" like I might. Nope. He takes this expert in the law, pulls him onto his lap and has a little story time.

The Teacher tells the "expert" that, in

the story, the Samaritan didn't first check to see what



neighborhood the hurting man was from. He didn't ask him his last name. He didn't try to find out if he was an illegal immigrant. He didn't check to see if he had a "Conceal and Carry" permit. He didn't examine the color of his skin. He didn't determine if they spoke the same language. He didn't check his ID. No.

He saw a dude in the dirt that needed help. He used his own wine and oil to cleanse the man's wounds. He bandaged him up, put him on his own donkey, and then walked with him to a place of shelter. He paid for the stranger's care and promised to come back and pay more. Period.

The Teacher looks the "expert" in the eyes and says, "Who was a neighbor to this man?" The "expert" says, "The one who showed mercy."

And the punch line? "Go, and do likewise."

Is it dangerous to meet the need of someone we do not know? Yes. Is it scary to reach out when we see someone hurting? It can be. Is it uncomfortable to stand up for the oppressed, the wounded, the outcast? Sometimes.

Our pastor's challenge to us...was that we ask God to show us the people in our regular flow of life who need us to see them, to share with them what we have, to walk beside them, and to befriend them. His closing words? "Take the risk to love for the sake of the Gospel."

Go, and do likewise.

Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid. For I, the Lord your God, will be with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9

IT'S ABOUT WHAT'S COMING

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often I would have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not."

Matthew 23:37

Where do you find security? That is a strange question to ask a Christian. Especially within the time frame of the Covid-19 scare and the racial unrest of 2020. Or is it? I have found that I have visited various venues in the security hunt over the past few months.

Some trails have taken me to the shelter of my family and the quietness of familiar surroundings. Who has not become much more familiar with the lines and "holes" of their living spaces over the past months? One trail has taken me to the familiar address of great music. Books are a sheltering place of sorts, and conversation even through cyberspace, has become a place of rest as well.

Our God calls us time and time again to find our solace in Him. Think of the words of the Savior in Matthew 11, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (v. 28). But because He is a gracious God, I do not see Him as stingy when it comes to comfort. In other words, I think His generosity abounds in the ways HE has given us to experience Him in His caring and shepherding role for us. The things listed above: music, books, home, etc. are expressions of His grandeur in the things of everyday life. And not only limited to them. He crafts our comfort in the personal touches He knows we need. One thing comforts us

today. He utilizes something different tomorrow.

And just as Jesus was giving warning as He reminded the people of Jerusalem of His tender care, we need to look ahead as well. Certainly, in these recent days we have all experienced a bit of being "off center," and the truth is there is probably more challenge before us. A bit of wisdom might be to daily acknowledge in prayer, that we realize God has been close and offered us His protection in the gifts of everyday things that He knows we love and appreciate.

The next time you hear a favorite song or hymn, gaze on a family portrait or even hold a pet, remember these are all gifts from God. And in their own way, they put on display the marvelous care of our God and Father, don't they? Comfort, shelter, security? They come to us under the wise provision of our Savior who cares for us in such personal ways. Let us pray we have eyes to see them.

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Due to frequently changing health notifications and guidelines, the printed calendar for this month is limited. We pray more events and activities will be forthcoming in August, God willing. Please see our website at redeemerjackson.org for online services and resources, and updates on upcoming activities and services as they become available. *Stay safe in our Lord's hands. May He continue to bless us all!*

~*~

July Newsletter

Moms, How Do We Help Race Relations?

by Abby Watts, retrieved from: http://www.imom.com/our-part-helping-racerelations/?utm_term=espressominute

I'm a 40-year-old white mom and I don't know what I should be doing right now. For me, posting on Facebook that "things need to change" feels like I'm checking a *look-at-me* box. So then, I ask, is there anything I can actually do to affect change, to make a difference, to respond instead of sit?

Then I get scared that my opinion and perspective are naive, privileged, and unaware. And as I think and pray about this, I've come upon the truth that yes, they are. But I can't allow that to put me in a place of paralyzed apathy, especially when it comes to race and parenting. The stakes are too high. So here are 3 things I'm going to do. I hope you'll come alongside me. Maybe together we can make a difference, not to make ourselves feel self-righteous for chipping in, but because it's the right thing to do.

1. I'm going to read.

Reading was my first instinct, so I'm going to go with it. I could read advice about race and parenting, but I think instead I'm going to commit to reading



a book by an African American author about a culture that is different from my own. I'll look for a book for my kids, too. As I wait for the books to arrive on my doorstep (I like turning the paper pages), I'll read an article or two from an online magazine that represents black culture.

Yep. I'm going to Google, "African American magazine articles" and start clicking and reading. For a moment, I'm going to allow myself to be outside my bubble. If I'm uncomfortable, I'll ask myself why. I'm not saying this is a fix, but it's a good first step.

2. I'm going to risk.

A dear friend of mine is Puerto Rican and her husband is African American. We were texting and I asked her how she was feeling. Her advice to me was, "We have to risk being uncomfortable." A few minutes later, a friend posted something on Facebook that reinforced a stereotype I have and I asked him politely, "How is this helping the situation?"

This was a low-risk confrontation. Maybe your mom, brother-in-law, or best friend says things and to call them out would cause a rift. I think it's time we start thinking outside our own needs and wants and speak the truth with love and respect.

3. I'm going to get intentional.

My influence over my city and its structure and policies feels minimal, but my influence over my children is



monumental. And mom, if you hear nothing else and click out of this article taking away no other words, hear this:

Parents are more powerful than politicians and policies.

Every player in this game politicians, police officers, rioters, protesters, racists—has a parent who influenced them, for good or for bad. We are teaching our children to judge,



love, serve, listen, riot, protest, sit back, or speak up. When it comes to race and parenting, I don't exactly know what to do to teach my kids how to be part of the solution. But ignoring the problem and pretending it doesn't exist just because in our world, we have the ability to look the other way? That's surely not it. So we'll talk. We'll look people in the eye. We'll try to expand our circle to include people who aren't just like us.

Is this enough?

On their own, none of these things will make a difference. And truthfully, they will not make a difference collectively if there is no change in my heart. If there is no recognition of what I've done to contribute to the problem or a true desire to gain understanding, respect, and empathy; I'm wasting my time. This isn't the perfect solution, and it might feel like it's not enough. But it's something. And we have to do *something*.

~*~

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: How are you feeling [about this topic of racial inequality], and what do you think we can do to affect [positive] change?

SHELTER

by Peggy Bennitt

As for me, I will sing about Your strength; I will praise Your loyal love in the morning. For You are my refuge and my place of **Shelter** when I face trouble.

Psalm 59:16

During the past few months of dealing with the "new normal" of this pandemic, where have you found your shelter? Many of us are "sheltering at home" or with extended family or friends. Some of us have been completely isolated while sheltering. But wherever we have taken shelter during this COVID-19 crisis, there are many of us who have *not felt sheltered* during this time of "sheltering in."

Many of the preventative go-tos for such health situations in the past, have been proven ineffective in this new environment of the coronavirus. Our shelters of FDA and CDC restrictions have not been dependable. Our scientific resources have been proven unreliable at best, and largely limited

and outdated. Human greed, corporate irresponsibility, and governmental apathy have contributed to this situation. The protections we assumed were in place have been shown to be fallible. But the truth is,

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we have all abdicated the responsibility of policing our own, and expected "others" to pick up the slack. So let's get back to our REAL SHELTER and to the WORD that never changes. The blame-game stops here. It stops with us!

As Christians in this imperfect world, we need to remember Whose we are and Who our Shelter really is. He has all this chaos and fear in His hands, and He knows what the plan is for all of us. In Psalm 27:1b, the psalmist tells us,

"The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

Some of the restrictions have been lifted at this point, and while some states have been very liberal in their health policies, others have been strict. But we as God's people know that humanity IS NOT PERFECT and we all do the best we can with what we've got. (It may help to imagine what you yourself would do if you were responsible for all the lives in this entire country, or in the State of Michigan, or even just Jackson County. The responsibility of each death would be laid at your door. That's a HUGE responsibility and a good leader will take it very seriously.)

Let's be the examples that God expects us to be and follow the



guidelines given by the government. As long as it does not go against God's laws, He expects us to obey the authorities *He* has allowed to be in leadership at this time, in this place.

He is our Shelter...now and always! He never leaves us. He has promised us to always be with us, and He loves us and keeps His promises. Let us continue to shelter in our Father's arms and trust Him with this world He created. He is our Shelter!

It is better to take shelter in the LORD than to trust in people.

Psalm 118:8

FAMILY FAITH LIFE

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

Get Out of the Storm

"Seek shelter." We hear it in the midst of storms, especially particularly bad storms. The intent behind it is not just seeking shelter, it's getting out of the storm however you can. Now, sometimes our options for shelter are limited—pulling over the car to lay underneath it, a camping tent that could easily blow away with you inside of it, grasping a toilet for lack of a basement, or when it seems like we have no good place for physical shelter, we just pray. We want to get out of the storm however we can, and sometimes our options for shelter are limited.

There are arguably more serious storms we face too, but we tend to frame them with the same mindset: get out of the storm however you can.

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Often our options for shelter from these storms are limited. When we are facing a marital crisis, we seek shelter in our friendships, working long hours, grasping onto our children, or when it seems like we have no good place for emotional shelter-we just pray. When we are facing a sin crisis that we cannot seem to keep ourselves out of, we seek shelter in keeping up appearances, addictive coping mechanisms, justifying our actions, or when it seems like we have no good place for spiritual shelter-we just pray. And so, it seems, we treat prayer in all the storms we walk through in life in the same way.

I think that's such an odd way of putting it, for believers anyway; we "just" pray. It's too often a last resort. It's something we do when we've exhausted all the other options that seem logical and viable to us. We feel like it is our only option that might possibly work. Instead of pursuing all the shelters of the world, we all would do better to *just pray right away*. When faced with a storm, pray. Simply turn to God for a shelter the world cannot give



us. We need never be so desparate to get out of the storm that we cannot think to take shelter in the only One who can provide what we need.

> What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear! What a priivlege to carry Everything to God in prayer! Oh, what peace we often forfeit; Oh, what needless pain we bear— All because we do not carry Everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged Take it to the Lord in prayer. Can we find a friend so faithful Who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our every weakness— Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden, Cumbered with a load of care? Precious Savior, still our refuge— Take it to the Lord in prayer. Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?

Take it to the Lord in prayer. In His arms He'll take and shield tee;

Thou wilt find a solace there.

Joseph M. Scriven, Public Domain

How to Talk about Race [With Your Kids]

Do! Talk with your kids.

Don't! Assume they don't need to know what's going on.

Do! Keep it simple!

Don't! Plot elaborate monologues about the multi-faceted complexities happening in our world right now.

Do! Define terms clearly in ageappropriate ways.

- Race=the groups of people based on physical characteristics or shared ancestry
- Discrimination=treating people differently because of their physical characteristics (usually treating them badly); sometimes this is how we treat them as individuals, and sometimes it's how one group treats another group as time passes, and the systems that are built continue those treatments
- Stereotypes=a generally held idea about a type of person

Don't! Assume they will "pick up" values from you or their experiences.

Do! Praise God for the differences He created in people. (Our God is so creative He even gave us each a different amount of melanin—wow!) Don't! Emphasize being colorblind.

Do! Start with the cross through which all are justified freely by grace through faith in Jesus.

Don't! Start with yourself. It's not about YOU.

Do! Talk about people as God's imagebearers, created in His image, over all created beings.

Don't! Talk about ethnicity, race or worldly ascriptions as being *most* important identity markers.

Do! Talk about ethnicity, race and worldly ascriptions as being part of what make each person who we are.

Don't! Ignore who people are and where/who they come from (their heritage).

Do! Have grace for people who talk and think differently than you do. Don't! Lambaste others who talk and think differently than you do.

Do! Educate the ignorant. **Don't!** Keep silent to sins of hatred or abuse.

Do! Listen and learn. Be humble and teachable. (Sometimes YOU are the ignorant one.) Don't! Think you already know all there

is to know about race issues in our world.

Do! Love. [Be patient, kind, not envying, not boasting, not proud, not dishonoring others, not selfseeking, not easily angered, keeping no record of wrongs, not delighting in evil but rejoicing with the truth, always protecting, always trusting, always hoping, always persevering. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)] Don't! Be a noisy gong or clanging cymbal by speaking without love. (1 Corinthians 13:1)

Do! Pray.

Don't! Think humanity can simply "do better" on our own apart from God.



SHELTER TOGETHER?

Redeemer Lutheran Church is once again open for Sunday worship. We now have three (3) services each Sunday: 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 11:00 a.m. Communion will be celebrated on 2nd and 4th Sundays at *ALL* services.

We are limiting service attendance to 50 people or under, to allow for safe physical distancing in our sanctuary, and in comfortable entrance to and exiting from our facility. Please sign up online at redeemerjackson.org, or, if you do not have access to the internet, please call the church office at 517-750-3100 to sign up for the service you

wish to attend. Please wear a face mask, until further notice, while attending services with us at Redeemer.



This is a protective device for all those around you; a respectful acknowledgment of their rights to remain protected and safe in our building. Between services, we will be disinfecting all areas used, including restroom facilities, elevator buttons and rails, door-openers and latches, etc. to protect all parishioners. Please exit the building reasonably quickly so that cleaning can commence and cleaned areas will not be re-infected before the next service attendees arrive. Thank you to all our staff, leadership, and members who are helping to make all these extra safety steps happen smoothly and efficiently without too much discomfort for our faith family of worshippers. God bless you all as we worship together; pray together that our merciful Lord give us



peace and joy as we are able to worship together once again. May He bless our worship and guide us through the next few months as we wade through the many new rules and guidelines to a safer tomorrow.





Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		2 0 2 0 C-Communion Service	1	2 Bethel Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	3	4 Independence Day
5 Divine Service 8:00 a.m. Divine Service 9:30 a.m. Praise Service 11:00 a.m.	6	7 Hour of Prayer 8:00 a.m.	8	9 Bethel Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	10	11
12 Divine Service—C 8:00 a.m. Divine Service—C 9:30 a.m. Praise Service—C 11:00 a.m.	13	14 Hour of Prayer 8:00 a.m.	15 Ministry Council 6:30 p.m. <i>REFLECTION</i> DEADLINE	16 Bethel Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	17	18
19 Divine Service 8:00 a.m. Divine Service 9:30 a.m. Praise Service 11:00 a.m.	20	21 Hour of Prayer 8:00 a.m.	22 Leadership Board 6:30 p.m.	23 Bethel Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	24	25
26 Divine Service—C 8:00 a.m. Divine Service—C 9:30 a.m. Praise Service—C 11:00 a.m.		28 Hour of Prayer 8:00 a.m. 7 acation F uly 27—30			31	