



Redeemer Reporter

REDEEMER REPORTER

SEPTEMBER, 2009

“What Are We To Do?”

At its Churchwide Assembly, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) adopted a “social statement” on human sexuality that includes an endorsement of same-sex relationships that are “chaste, monogamous and lifelong.” This is, of course, contrary to Holy Scripture which teaches us that God, in His creation, created man and woman to live together as man and wife in a chaste, monogamous and lifelong relationship. (Read Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9, 18 and 7:2-9, John 4:17-18, 1 John 1:9, Genesis 1:27-28 and 2:18-24, Matt. 19:4-6.) This we know is the natural order of things which is inherent in God’s good creation itself. Deviation from this natural order, and natural law, are a consequence of the fall into sin. To be sure, there is no middle ground on this issue. The ELCA has, again, demonstrated that it is outside the one, holy, Christian and apostolic church to the extent that it has embraced this false teaching.

What then are we Lutherans to do who do not share this view? While much could be, and needs to be written, on the enormous implications of this action for a whole host of issues and relationships we have with the ELCA (The pamphlet *What About The Difference Between the ELCA and the LCMS*, provided in this newsletter and also located in one of the pamphlet holders in our narthex), but for now it is important for pastors and all faithful Lutherans to do the following:

Be clear about what we stand for as Lutherans who do not share the ELCA’s opinions on this issue of human sexuality. To do this, it is good once more to familiarize ourselves with the basic truths of God’s Word regarding homosexuality. The pamphlet *What About Homosexuality* (also provided in this newsletter and will also be available in one of our pamphlet holders in our narthex), offers an excellent, but brief overview of what God’s Word says. I encourage you to read and then with courage distribute this excellent little summary widely to family and friends who may be confused about what the Word of God says regarding this issue.

We also need to make it clear that we, in no way, are excluding homosexuals from the Church. We exclude nobody. I repeat, we exclude nobody, but welcome all to join us as repentant sinners before the throne of a loving and merciful God. We reach out with God’s convicting Word of Law and God’s saving Gospel. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod also produced a very helpful *Plan for Ministry to Homosexuals and Their Families*,

which you may find using the following link: (it’s 40 plus pages in length and thought it wise not to include it in this newsletter for fear of our editor and bursting our budget) [http://](http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/CIC/minhomfam.pdf)

www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/CIC/minhomfam.pdf.



We must remember that even as much as we deeply disagree with this action on the part of the ELCA, and while it causes us great grief, anguish and, yes, even anger, we must be careful to remember that this is an opportunity to demonstrate loving care and concern for those caught up in this error and for those who are striving to resist this false teaching. We live in an area where Lutheran Churches abound and we are thankful for that. However, let us make our witness constructive and be cautious that in our zeal to condemn error according to God’s holy Word we would not cause harm to their soul. Let us witness to the truth, speaking that truth in love to our fellow Lutherans.

The truth is that this action, while dramatic and a trouble spot for man, is simply a very visible symbol of the intensely deep theological error that has the ELCA in what can only be described as a death-grip. What has happened is very much similar to seeing a large, old, beautiful tree suddenly break and fall, and upon examination, we see that inside, at its core, there set in years ago a rot that could not be overcome. What are we to do?

In a gentle, caring and loving manner, we can use this situation to lead people to recognize that this is by no means something that is really shocking or surprising. The ELCA was formed by three liberal Lutheran church bodies in 1988 that had already long before walked away from a faithful Lutheran doctrinal position on the authority of Scripture. The many full communion agreements over the years, for example with the Episcopal Church USA, the United Church of Christ, the Reformed Church in America, the Presbyterian Church USA, the Moravian Church, and now the United Methodist Church have signaled, time and time again, that the ELCA has lost sight of what it is to be a faithful, Biblical Lutheran church body.

(Continued on Page 3)

REDEEMER LUTHERAN
CHURCH

Pastor Rev. James Kress
Office Secretary Jennifer Steele
Organist Doris Dykhuizen

OFFICERS

President Ron Beaber
Vice President Ed Sheahan
Treasurer Leta Stender
Secretary Dorothy Sinowetski

BOARDS

Assimilation Pam DeGourse
Property Management Charlie Vovcsko
Christian Ed. Bill Bowers (Acting)
Elders Tim Byrne
Human Care
Outreach Carol Haupt
School Board Bill Bowers
Stewardship Joe Friess
Youth Jim Wright
Lisa Vassallo
Finance Sec'y. Karen Kirkland
Newsletter Editor Leta Stender

CLUBS/GUILDS

Ladies Guild Carol Sheahan
Men's Group Bob Mortenson
Red Hat Society Sandra Distasio
Christian Support Group

President's Corner



The President's Corner

A lot of things have been happening at our Church. Two Ford Vans were donated to us by the Herb Bohm estate. Herb was a long time member of our Church, and his generous donation will allow our Child Care and Youth programs to grow. Ed Sheahan has agreed to be our Vice President, and has hit the ground running. He has agreed to be in charge of the bus as well as the two new vans. I have a lot of confidence in Ed, as we have been working together on several projects. Welcome aboard Ed.

Michelle Finley has resigned as the President of the School Board. I was quite surprised and saddened by her resignation. Few knew how many hours she dedicated to saving the Child Care, and what a debt our Church owes her. While we will greatly miss her and her business skills in leading the Child Care, we are very fortunate to have Bill Bowers step forward to take over not only the President of the School Board, but accept the position as acting Chairman of the Christian Education Board. Bill has a lot of experience with school boards, having been elected on his local public school board, and serving as President. We all need to thank Bill, and assist him in any way we can. We are very fortunate to have the Wendy Horvath as our Director, and with her running the day to day business of the Child Care, and the procedures put in place by Michelle, Bill will have a chance to get his feet wet as he takes over this very important leadership position.

While we have had some Counsel positions vacant recently and some for a while, I believe that we have a great group of leadership to guide our congregation.

The Child Care continues to grow, with over 70 children, and a renewed spirit of cooperation between the Church and Child Care. The finances remain in the black, and the School Board approved some needed expenditures to update, and replace many items from books, and toys to several new items.

Expenses in the Church budget are now greater than our income. We have substantial reserves, and this is normal for us during the summer. We now have the salary of a full time Pastor, and temporarily have the housing allowance until he closes on their home. Electricity is up, as well as most monthly expenses, and our giving is down even more than the normal summer reduction as we all struggle through this recession. We will continue to closely watch our expenses, and I will keep you informed.

Mary and I just returned from the Child Care ice cream social. It was a great time of fellowship not only with Church members, but also with the children, parents, and staff of the Child Care. I am looking forward to joining the Youth at the Stone Crabs game next Saturday.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Ron Beaber, President

“What Are We To Do?”

(Continued From Page 1)

We should use this situation to help our brother and sisters in Christ understand how things reached this point. We must do so humbly and without any hint of sensationalism or even dare to say, “Good thing we are not like ‘those’ Lutherans.” Repent! We are all sinners before our God and we must now bear one another’s burdens, in love, truthfully and faithfully.

I leave you with these words from Peter, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For *it is better*, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.” (1 Peter 3:15-17) The peace of Jesus be with you always.

In His Service, Pastor Jim Kress

Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for submission of articles for October is **Sunday, Sept. 20th by 6 p.m.**

If you have an article you would like to submit for the newsletter, either e-mail it to letastender@gmail.com or place it in the newsletter box in the church office. Articles received after September 20th will be held for the October newsletter.



Please be sure to put your name on the article so I can contact you if there are any questions.

Leta Stender

Support Our Troops

Every week we include prayers for our young people serving in the military. The Rotonda West Veterans of Foreign Wars Post is holding its annual “Support our Troops and Veterans Golf Scramble”, the proceeds of which are used to provide services and benefits for active duty military, their families, and veterans. It will be held on October 25th with a noon shotgun start at the Hills Course in Rotonda. Cost is \$60.00 per person and includes prizes and a prime rib or grouper dinner at the Hills Country Club. I know we have quite a few veterans at Redeemer, and with the count of seventeen young folks on our prayer list we also have parents and grandparents of active duty troops. Please give some consideration to enjoying a great day of golf while helping the VFW help our active duty troops and veterans. Additional information may be found at www.vfw-rotonda-fl.110mb.com or by calling me at 838-2635.

Thank you

Roger Luedtke
Redeemer Elder
VFW Adjutant

Stephen Ministry



Stephen Ministry highlights the month of September Dorothea (Dottie) Mae LaMere who was commissioned as a Stephen Minister, March, 2009. Dottie and her husband Bob live from December to April in Englewood, FL and the rest of the year in Parkers Prairie, MN. Dottie and Bob have been married since December 17, 1955 and have two daughters and one son. They adopted their two grandsons in 1991 (ages 5 & 9) after the death of their son. They have been in FL and at Redeemer since January 1996. Dottie graduated in 1952 from Swedish Hospital as a registered nurse. Her jobs since that time have been in obstetrics, newborn nursery, and psychiatry. Dottie was also Director of Nursing at Gustavus Adolphus College health service. Her last employment before retiring in 1989 was twenty four years at Community Hospital. Dottie's hobbies, interests and talents include music, especially classical, and for eight years she sang with the Sweet Adeline's church choir sextet. She enjoys listening to public radio, playing bridge (she says she is still learning), walking in the early hours three miles, attending Curves, Bible study, American history and all activities with her family. Dottie says she became a Stephen Minister because of being a Christian and a care giver. She wanted to take the Stephen Ministry training because she cares about people and she feels we Christians are to encourage and comfort each other. Pastor Haugh's writings were very helpful, in that, we need to listen to each other, share God's word, pray together and allow God to be the cure giver.

Thank you Dottie for your genuine interest in the classes and your input to the dialogue which makes the classes a learning experience. What a blessing for a care receiver to have you as their care giver.

"We have Heard of Your Faith in Christ Jesus and of the Love You Have For All the Saints. Colossians 1:4

Submitted by Carol Carlos

Support Group

The members of the "Support Group" extend and open invitation to members and friend of our Redeemer Sisters and Brothers. We meet the last Wednesday of each month, at 10 AM in the "Quiet Room", in the church narthex.

The Support Group members meet to assist each other through new experiences, to add strength and encouragement, and also to rejoice when prayers have been answered. The members look forward to gathering together to share their doubts and give praise, to support and encourage. Friends are invited to attend and share, to be with others who enjoy Christian fellowship.

We always have a scriptural lesson and prayer. The lesson at the July meeting was from Luke, Chapter 11: The first four verses is Jesus instruction for prayer, the next four verses is Jesus' parable about prayer. The next verses were in connection with Jesus somewhat strange questions. The great lesson that Jesus teaches, is that God does answer our prayers. He delights in giving to His children as much as they need. "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1)

Submitted by Margie Cypher

Ushers are always needed. Plan ahead and call Tom Kirkland (941) 474-6407 and let him know the dates and service times (8 a.m. or 10:30 a.m.) you could help. Unsure of being an usher, call Tom and he will do a walk through of the usher's duties upon request.

Submitted by Tom Kirkland



September 2009 Newsletter

Redeemer Lutheran Child Care & After-School

Enrollment is 75 Children

Bible Lessons

Chapel is on Mondays at 3:30

David and Jonathan

1 Samuel 18:3-4;20:42

The lost sheep

Luke 15:3-7

David and Goliath

1 Samuel 17

Jacob takes care of Joseph

Genesis 37:3,12-14



Love comes from God.

1 John 4:7

Birthdays

Brandon 9/7

Ryan 9/14

Skylar 9/16



Thank You's

TO: Carl Beltz for the computer and Thank you for all the member donations and supplies.

Needed Supplies

If anyone has a new or used Microwave, Snacks, Batteries, Hand Soap and Baby Wipes.

What We Are Learning.

Sept. 7-11 Friends & Feelings

Sept. 14-18 Pets and living things

Sept. 21-25 Opposites

Sept. 28-Oct. 2 Colors, Shapes and Sizes

VPK

We had an awesome first few weeks of VPK. The children are adjusting well to the schedule and routine of the day! We have been focusing much attention on writing and recognizing the letters of our names. They are doing very well!

~Mrs. Lisa, VPK Teacher

Submitted by Wendy Horvath

Stewardship

Gratitude for God's Blessings, September, 2009



In September we observe Labor Day, a legal holiday in honor of labor. The Bible deals with labor in a variety of ways. In Genesis 2:15 we read that *"The Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."* (NIV) It was part of God's plan of creation to make human beings for work and provide work for them.

Work is important for us. It is important enough that we often answer questions like who or what we are by referring to our work. We may answer in a number of different ways like I'm a teacher, or a plumber, or a carpenter, or an office manager, or a business owner, or a pastor, or a doctor, or one of many other vocations. No wonder people get depressed when they are without jobs and meaningful work to do. Much of our self esteem is tied in closely with our work.

As God's redeemed stewards we recognize that God has entrusted to us many things to manage and work with according to His will and plan. To not be willing to work and still expect to receive good things is like stealing. Ephesians 4:28 says, *"He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need."* (NIV)

Honest labor provides us with a sense of fulfillment and provides for our own needs and something extra to share with others who are in need. The book of Ecclesiastes includes a number of passages like 2:24; 3:12-13; 22; 5:18-20 that encourage us to find joy in our work. Work is a blessing from God and He gives us the time, talent and resources to do our work in a way that honors God and blesses others as well as ourselves. The words of Hebrews 13:20-21 affirm this truth: *"May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."* (NIV)

So this September as many things like vacations are over and new things start up again—school, mission and ministry efforts in our congregations as well as other September activities—let's remember that with the power of the Holy Spirit we can live and work as God's redeemed stewards who freely and joyfully manage all of life and life's resources for His purposes. May we always be encouraged to give our very best when it comes to our financial gifts of love, our use of time and talents, and our willing service at home, in the workplace, in our communities and in our congregations.

Joseph Friess, Stewardship Chairman

Caring Network

As most of you know, the Caring Network tries to keep track of all church members in the case of their needs, such as rides to doctors, meals, sitting, or just to call and say hi. We are in need of volunteers for these items. Many of our volunteers are associate members and, therefore, in the summer we are caught short handed. We also need a Group Leader. This does not take much of ones time. Most groups consist of ten or twelve persons. If you are interested in helping out for this most worthy cause, please call me.

You may sign up on the list in the Narthex if you can assist with any of the above.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration.
Lessie Kirch

HEALING:

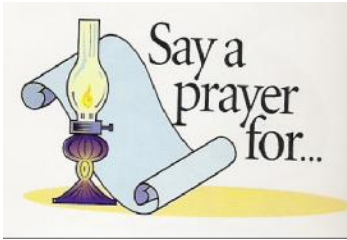
Members

Henrietta Appold
 Alice Borowski
 Wilbur Bruce
 Marie Elphick
 Sharon Eisele
 Roland Hansen
 Bob Johnson
 Charles Keller
 Cliff Larsen
 Leona Morrison
 Harriet Payne
 Carolyn Plesner
 Don Plesner
 Tom Poyer
 Bonnie Roussin
 Sharron Schultz
 Ed Sita
 Pastor Thomason
 Arlene Twombly
 Lee Vandercook
 Barbara Wolgast

Friends & Relatives

Georgia Bush
 Carly DeFeos
 Chase (Dykhuizen's great grandson)
 John Denick
 Bruce Gnatkowski
 Debbie Harrison
 Larry Headun
 Glory Herget
 Michelle Hickner
 Aaron Hingos
 Jeremy Hoivik
 Howard Kagay
 Rachel Kagay
 Erin Kress & Unborn Child
 Rev. Howie Krienke
 John Lichty
 Marie Liebl

Josephine Maldice
 Elsie Malecki
 Dan Mason
 Laurie Middleton & Family
 Kaye Ann Nagel
 Judy Nagel
 Mike Pedretti
 Charles Pentecost, Jr.
 Sherrie Rhoades
 Audrey Slusher
 Nancy Sly
 Michael Stio
 Marion Talley
 Phyllis Tucker
 Kathy Walsh
 Helen Weishaar
 Andrew Wolgast
 Eileen Zwick



Ilse Berner
 Gloria Carlson
 Evelyn Etheridge
 Earl Gossett
 Ruth Jansch
 Clara & Walter Mitchell
 Ruth Sutley

PRAYERS OF COMFORT for family and friends of Lorna Straub who was called to her eternal home on August 13th.

PRAYERS OF COMFORT for family and friends of Joan Johnson who was called to her eternal home on August 12th.

Military Personnel

Daniel Anderson
 Adam Buchner
 Eric Byrne
 Kevin Copeman
 Christopher Dutch
 Michael Garza
 Stephen Geib
 Brian Hollis
 Nathan Hudson

Brian Jackson
 Jennie Janssen
 Keith Janssen
 Joshua Jones
 Steven Siegmundt
 Jeremy Twombly
 Matthew Walenta
 Charles Weishaar

Ladies Guild

For some reason this is the greatest time of year. Most of the hot summer days are over--kids are back in school--vacations are over and all our friends from the north will be coming back soon. So it is time to turn our thoughts to getting organized as the Ladies Guild begins a new season.

Our monthly gatherings will resume on Wed. Oct. 7th at 12:30 as we enjoy coffee and dessert. Devotions and business meeting begins at 1:00. Good Christian fellowship and inspiration are included in our monthly gatherings as we plan for the coming season.

We will be having an Exec. Board Meeting Friday Sept. 28th at 10 AM to finalize LWML Sunday which is Oct. 14th. We will also be going over our constitution and "Love Gifts". All members are invited to attend this meeting.

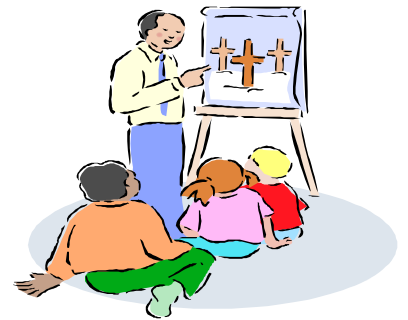
Plans are under way for the LWML Zone Rally which Redeemer is hosting on Nov. 7th, but we need everyone's help to make this a success. If you are willing to help in any way please call Avis Stuck at 941-475-7862.

Please join us at our next meeting Wed. Oct. 7th. All Redeemer ladies are greatly welcomed. We are a group dedicated to serving our church and mission while having a good time.

Submitted by Linda Rogers (941-876-3029)

Sunday School

Sunday School Teachers Meeting and Fall Planning: Thursday September 3, 2009, at the church. All materials will be handed out to teachers for the Fall Curriculum and discussion for the upcoming Rally Day September 13, 2009, along with some other items of interest! Teachers that have already committed: Lisa Vasallo-Jr High; Wendy Horvath-Lower Grades; Carol Vovcsko-Early Childhood: Substitute Teachers Barb Duff, Pam Replinger, Debbie Balogh, and Lisa Kress. Please consider serving God's Kingdom with teaching our youngsters as we still need a teacher for the Middle Grades (3rd-5th) and High School. If you would prayerfully consider this and would like to help our youngsters in this way please see Pastor Kress 941.979.2976, Lisa Kress 941.889.8938, or Bill Bowers 941.416.5661. Sunday School teacher's meeting will be held on Thursday, September 3 at 7 p.m.



Submitted by Lisa Kress

Sept. 6	The DeGourse Family
Sept. 13	Leta Stender & Karen Kirkland
Sept. 20	Judy Scarangella & Linda Rogers
Sept. 27	Clare Kieselburg & Helen Plank

Submitted by Pam DeGourse



Try the Hula dance class!

You'll love it!!

Sept. 1 (Tues. morning) 9 a.m.

\$6 per class





The youth group was a bit quiet this summer. Our last outing before summer was at the beach May 24 and we also visited the Suncoast Humane Society on June 5th. Most of the children were away in July & August visiting family.

We would like to congratulate our 3 Confirmands that made their Confirmation on May 31, 2009. They are Alex Ruccatano, Naomi Sylvester, and McKenna Heldenbrand. May God Bless you all & we look forward to seeing the 3 of you to help with the other confirmation classes this coming year.

This year our Confirmation-Youth group will consist of 4th graders to 8th graders. We are very excited that our youth is growing. We look forward to welcoming all the youth to our wonderful church & youth program.

Our program will be expanding due to the wonderful turn out we had a VBS. Our older children in the youth program were helpers for the week of VBS. A big "thank you" to Billy Ruccatano, Naomi Sylvester, Alexandria Murphy, & Matthew Geist.

The youth will be doing a lot of exciting & new things this year. Starting with our 1st annual Youth Golf Outing Fund-raiser on October 3, @ Long Marsh in Rotonda. Cash prizes, door prizes, food & fun all for \$40 player. Then in November the youth & congregation will join in an outing together to The Holy Land in Orlando on Nov. 13-14.

To conclude we would like to send a hello with love & prayers to Pastor Thomason, we miss you. We also would like to say thank you Lord for bringing us Pastor Kress & Lisa Kress. We are very blessed to have them both.

Lisa Vassallo, (CO-director)

Assimilation

The Assimilation Board will be resuming their regular scheduled meetings effective October 20th, 2009.

Over the summer, we made arrangements for Pastor Kress to have his picture taken and it is now displayed on the "Wall of Pastors" in the Narthex.

An updated directory was completed and distributed in July. Another directory will be done in November.

A special "thanks" to Jane Hoivik for faithfully setting up our coffee hour table and to Pat Wilcoxon who helps in Jane's absence. Ray Janssen makes sure he is at the church extra early on Sunday mornings in order to have the coffee "perked" for our parishioners. His back-up is Tommy Kirkland. Thank you gentlemen for your help in this endeavor!

We continue to thank **ALL** who serve as host and hostess for our coffee hours.

Yours in Christ,

Pam DeGourse, Board Chairperson

SCRIP

SCRIP

SEPTEMBER orders for Scrip will be taken **Sunday, September 6th**, in the church narthex after the 8:00 a.m. service and before and after the 10:30 a.m. service. Orders will be returned **Sunday, September 13th**. Thank you to everyone who placed orders in July and August.



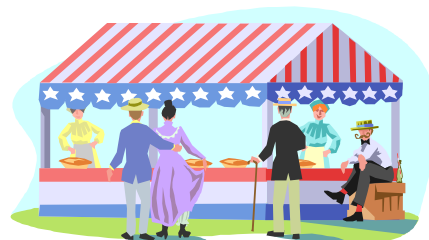
Scrip is a substitute for money. They are gift cards for every thing from fast food restaurants, food stores, department stores, gasoline, office product stores and even hotels, cruises and many more. Every month we have an updated [list on the desk in the Narthex](#). Everyone who is interested should pick up a copy and at least see what is available.

The percentage the Ladies Guild makes is based on the scrip orders for the month. This percentage is then applied to our [mission projects](#). Your support is appreciated.

Assistant Scrip taker, Pat Wilcoxon

Rally Day

Sunday School Rally Day-Sunday School Rally Day will be Sunday September 13, 2009. While the Fall curriculum starts September 6, 2009 we will have an Installation of our Sunday School Teachers at the 10:30 service and a Carnival for the children and congregation following the same service. The Carnival should be a great deal of fun with a Bounce House, a dunk tank (Pastor or the President?!), basketball shoot game, bozo buckets, duck pond game, hot dogs, cotton candy, snow cones, and prizes for all! Please invite any youngsters you may know as the day should be fun for all! This will be a great opportunity for the youth to get to know their teachers and the congregation in a fun-filled setting!



Submitted by Lisa Kress



Choir starts on Sept. 16th! For the thrill of a lifetime,
BE THERE!

We will love having you, no matter what your music ability is!—We will teach you!

TRY IT!!!

New Members

JENNIFER J. STEELE and SCOTLYN SARAH STEELE

470 Leach Street
Englewood, FL 34223
Tel. (941) 726-7985



Jennifer has been working as Redeemer's church secretary since February 23, 2009. She has a 2 year old daughter Scotlyn, who will be enrolling in our Child Care next month. Jennifer enjoys Kayaking (when time allows) and reading. She was born in New York, has lived in Michigan, Georgia and now resides in Englewood, FL.

JACOB M. NEEF

5 Annapolis Lane
Rotonda West, FL 33947
Tel. (941) 258-2324



Jacob comes to us from Des Moines, Iowa. He is currently employed at the Blue Dolphin Car Wash in Englewood, FL. He enjoys fishing, boating, jet skiing and the beach. His fiancé is Stacy Bowers.

WILLIAM S. and JOAN M. BOWERS

15024 Lyneburg Ave.
Port Charlotte, FL 33981
Tel. (941) 828-3668



(Joan unavailable for photo)

Bill and Joan both work at Bowers Appraisal Services. They have two daughters, Stacy and Kristine. Bill enjoys playing the organ, piano and fishing. Joan enjoys babysitting her 3 month old granddaughter. Also, she likes fishing and working with the Sunday School. Bill and Joan were both born in Chicago, IL.

STACY A. BOWERS

5 Annapolis Lane
Rotonda West, FL 33947
Tel. (941) 258-2325



Stacy is the daughter of Bill and Joan Bowers. She was born in Oaklawn, IL. She has a 3 month old daughter, Briana. She is currently employed at the Blue Dolphin Car Wash in Englewood, FL. She enjoys karaoke singing, boating, jet skiing and the beach. Her fiancé is Jacob Neef.

KRISTINE BALTIMORE

14348 Worthwhile Road
Port Charlotte, FL. 33953
Tel. (941) 876-6622



Kristine is the daughter of Bill and Joan Bowers. She is married to James Baltimore. She was born in Chicago, IL. Kristine works in a doctor's office. Her interests are shopping, going to the beach, karaoke singing and playing with her niece Briana.

DENNIS and PAMELA REPLINGER

6967 Spinnaker Blvd.
Englewood, FL 34224
Tel. (941) 473-9018



Dennis was born in Reedsburg, WI. His hobbies are art, working with stain glass, fishing and reading. Pamela was born in Madison, WI. Her interests include singing in the choir, art, reading and playing with their dog Madison. Pamela works at Lemon Bay High School.

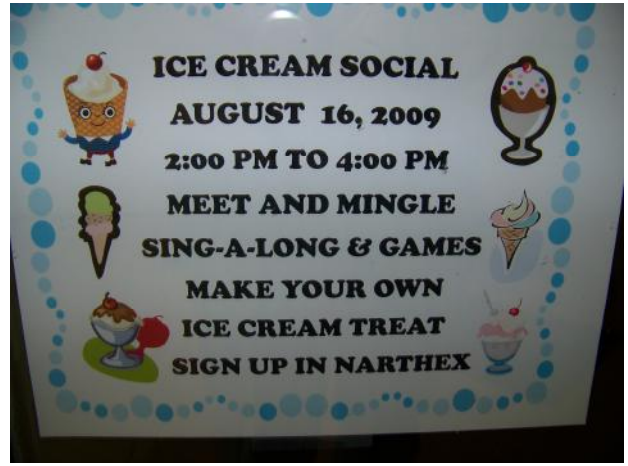
ALICE R. BOROWSKI

12014 Claremont Dr.
Port Charlotte, FL. 33981
Tel. (941) 697-7733



(Ray Janssen is Assisting)

Alice was born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. She is retired and loves listening to music.



Vacation Bible School

Gadget's Garage was the theme for this year's Vacation Bible School where Gadget and Gizmo the Robot introduced 45 Children to five incredible Bible stories that showed the wonders of God's world, His indescribable love in Christ, and His unshakable Word in the Bible. Gadget helped the children remember that God's Always Doing Great, Exciting Things through Jesus, our Savior." EUREKA!" A very special thank you to everyone ~ Pat Petersen, Helen Sturzenbecker, Dolores Altmann, Georgette Callahan, Pat Luedtke, Lisa Kress, Carol Carlos, Lisa Vassallo, Bill Bowers, Pam Replinger, Pastor Kress, Naomi Sylvester, Billy Ruccatano, Alexandria Murphy, Matthew Geist, James Gomez, Samantha Brewer, Mark Horvath and all the Child Care Teachers!



Bible Stories
Mark, Matthew, Billy, Pastor



Sand Art
Hailey, Lauren, Sara, Jackie, Samantha



Craft Time
Billy, Samantha, Hailey





What About . . .

The Difference Between the ELCA and the LCMS

August 1997 will be long remembered as an important time in the history of the Lutheran church here in America. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America [ELCA] made a number of very significant decisions during that month. It declared full communion with three Reformed churches: the United Church of Christ, the Reformed Church of America, and the Presbyterian Church—USA. It based this decision on its opinion that there is no longer essential disagreement between the ELCA and these Reformed churches. Furthermore, the ELCA decided that the long-standing differences between Lutheranism and the Roman Catholic Church over the question of how we are saved have been resolved.

These decisions have caused considerable confusion within the ELCA as well as within our own church, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod [LCMS]. It has caused many people to wonder what the differences are between the ELCA and the LCMS, even though our two churches both use the name “Lutheran.”

The LCMS has a tremendous opportunity to make it very clear, both to our own members, as well as to the world at large, what it means to remain committed to the full truth of the Holy Scriptures and the historic confessions of the Lutheran church. This pamphlet is intended to offer a brief overview of the key differences between the ELCA and the LCMS. Hopefully, it will help you understand these differences so that you will be able to discuss them with others.

Our Difference Over the Bible

The LCMS and the ELCA disagree about the nature and authority of the Bible. While both of our churches profess allegiance to the Reformation principle that Scripture alone is the supreme authority for the church’s doctrine and life, our two church bodies have significant differences when it comes to putting this principle into practice.

The LCMS believes that the Bible is actually the Word of God, and therefore, is totally truthful, reliable and free from any error. We believe that the Scriptures are the final standard by which we must judge everything that we believe, teach and confess.

The ELCA, on the other hand, avoids making statements that confess the full truthfulness of the Bible. It holds that Scripture is not necessarily always accurate or trustworthy in

all its details and parts. The ELCA tolerates and encourages methods of interpreting the Scripture that presuppose that the Bible contains error and is unclear about various doctrinal matters.

Our difference over the Bible explains other more visible differences. For example, our churches disagree about the ordination of women to the pastoral office, the issue of homosexuality and the question of abortion. The LCMS does not ordain women to the pastoral office, while the ELCA does, in spite of the fact that Holy Scripture clearly teaches otherwise.

The LCMS unequivocally teaches that homosexual behavior is intrinsically sinful because it is contrary to God’s Word. In love, we want to help the person caught up in the homosexual life to repent of his sin and receive God’s forgiveness. The ELCA has been unable to take a clear Biblical stand against homosexual behavior. It also tolerates groups within its midst that openly advocate the homosexual lifestyle both for clergy and laity.

The LCMS has repeatedly condemned willful abortion as contrary to God’s clear commandment not to murder. The ELCA has not been able to speak out clearly against abortion, and, sadly, even pays for willful abortion procedures for members in its health insurance plan.

While there are other examples, these three serve to make the point that our differences over the authority and reliability of God’s Word lie at the heart of the other differences between the ELCA and the LCMS.

Our differences over the authority of the Lutheran Confessions

Our two churches also disagree about the authority of the historic Lutheran confessional statements contained in the Book of Concord. The LCMS binds itself to the entire doctrinal content of the 16th-century Lutheran confessional writings. We agree with the confessions of our church not merely *insofar* as they agree with the Bible (a position which would allow individual members to reject certain doctrines), but *because* these confessional statements are in complete harmony with God’s inspired and inerrant Word. We therefore accept without reservation all the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God, normative also for the church today.

What about The Difference Between the ELCA and the LCMS?

The ELCA, on the other hand, does not require that its church workers and congregations pledge unqualified acceptance of the full doctrinal content of the Book of Concord. The ELCA views the Lutheran Confessions as historical expressions of the faith held to be true at the time that they were written, but not necessarily as normative standards for teaching and practice today.

Our differences over what is necessary for church fellowship

Given its approach to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, it comes as no surprise that the ELCA would consider it possible to enter into fellowship with churches that teach things that are clearly contrary to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. These sorts of fellowship arrangements are a reflection of the attitude that absolute truth is unable to be known, confessed and asserted. This attitude is contrary to the confessional principle of the Lutheran church that is characterized in the Book of Concord with two very important phrases: “We believe, teach, and confess” and “We reject and condemn.” These phrases reflect the Lutheran church’s firm belief that God’s Word is clear, that it does assert truth that is binding for all times and all peoples, and that we are able with joy to confess and proclaim this truth.

The LCMS believes that the Bible requires full agreement in doctrine before it is possible to join in altar and pulpit fellowship with other churches (Rom. 16:17). On the other hand, the ELCA believes that disagreement in important doctrinal truths does not prohibit altar and pulpit fellowship with other churches.

A good example of this attitude is found in the documents the ELCA used to establish church fellowship with the three Reformed churches. In these documents, it is admitted that “important theological differences ... remain between our two churches in such questions as the understanding of the Lord’s Supper and Christology.” These differences are viewed “not as disagreements that need to be overcome, but as diverse witnesses to the one Gospel that we confess in common.”

What this means is that the ELCA is willing to tolerate the Reformed church’s denial that Jesus Christ is really present in the consecrated bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper. The Reformed believe Jesus is present only “spiritually” but not really present in a miraculous manner in the bread and wine. Lutheranism has never accepted the Reformed Church’s denial of our Lord’s real presence in Holy Communion. The ELCA now claims that the errors of the Reformed church regarding the Lord’s Supper and the doctrine of the person and work of Christ are acceptable options. This has never before been the

position of the Lutheran church, and reveals a decided movement away from historic Lutheranism on the part of the ELCA.

The ELCA’s attitude toward doctrine obscures the vital relationship that exists between the saving Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and all other teachings of Scripture that are centered and rooted in that Gospel—teachings our Lord Himself has given to us to believe and to share with others (Matt. 28:20). The ELCA position regarding church fellowship compromises Scripture’s clear mandate to confess and proclaim “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27)—in all its Gospel-centered truth and purity.

Synod’s opportunity for faithful clarity

All Lutherans have a wonderful opportunity to wrestle with the question of what it means to be a confessional Lutheran church in this day and age. What does it mean to say that we embrace the Holy Scripture as the inerrant and inspired Word of God? What teachings will therefore be rejected? What truths will be raised high as positions that can never be compromised or bargained away for the sake of external church unity? What does it mean to say we agree unconditionally with the Lutheran Confessions as pure expositions of the Word of God? Given this unqualified subscription to the Lutheran Confessions, what issues are non-negotiable and can never be surrendered or given up by Lutherans who wish to remain genuinely confessional Lutherans? What makes for true church union? Is “agreeing-to-disagree” an appropriate attitude for Lutherans when it comes to establishing church fellowship?

The differences between our two churches are a source of great sadness for the LCMS. We take no pleasure in talking about these differences. We wish that our two churches could share a common confession of what it means to be Lutheran. It is important that the members of LCMS congregations have a clear picture of why our two churches are not in fellowship. Knowing the basic differences between our two churches will help us talk with our ELCA friends and family members in a loving and kindly manner.

— Dr. A. L. Barry
President

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



What About . . .

Homosexuality

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. This pamphlet is intended to help Christians answer some questions about homosexuality. The church recognizes this as both a significant challenge and, more importantly, as an opportunity to speak the truth in love, reaching out with the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

What does God say about homosexuality in His Word, the Bible?

The Lord teaches us through His Word that homosexuality is a sinful distortion of His desire that one man and one woman live together in marriage as husband and wife. God categorically prohibits homosexuality. Our church, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, has declared that homosexual behavior is “intrinsically sinful.” Why does our church take this position?

We read in God’s Word the following statements about homosexuality:

“You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. . . . Do not defile yourselves by any of these things” (Lev. 18:22, 24).

“If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. . . .” (Lev. 20:13).

“For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error” (Rom. 1:26–27).

“Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6:9–10).

“. . . The law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, . . . immoral persons, sodomites . . . and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine” (1 Tim. 1:9–10).

Through His Word, God teaches us very clearly that homosexuality is a sin. A person who persists in homosexual behavior stands under the condemnation of God’s Word. This is true for anyone who persists in sin without repentance. While this may be an unpopular message, it is the truth taught to us by God in His Word.

What is the church’s message to persons who are homosexual?

The church’s message to homosexual persons is the same message it proclaims to all people: Repent and believe the Gospel! All human beings are born with a sinful nature that results in sinful thoughts, words and actions. Homosexuality is but one of many sinful situations human beings encounter in this life. From the moment we are born, all human beings stand under God’s perfect judgement. All of us, by nature, are lost and condemned sinners. We all need God’s mercy in Christ for our salvation.

The church’s most important message to homosexuals is the promise of forgiveness and eternal life through the person and the work of Jesus Christ. God sent His Son into this world to live a perfect life on our behalf, and to die a perfect death as the payment for all of our sins.

A statement regarding homosexuality from the Lutheran Church in Australia summarizes the church’s response to homosexuality in a very helpful way: “The Church, while rejecting on the one hand the movement which claims tolerance of homosexual behavior in the name of freedom of the individual and of moral progress, must also resist the popular reaction of persecution and ostracism.

“The Church must exhibit understanding and sympathy for the homosexual, show love and pastoral concern, being ready to give help and encouragement in whatever way possible. It must proclaim to homosexuals, as it does to all men, the judgment of God against sin, above all the forgiveness of sin for Christ’s sake, and the possibility of new life through the power of the Holy Spirit. . . .”

Another Lutheran pastor has written about homosexuality: “God is presenting to the Church a great challenge and opportunity. We can proclaim the Word of God in a clear and fresh manner. We can offer new hope to sinners whom God loves. We can apply the Means of Grace to another area of human need, so that sins can be forgiven and the Spirit’s power employed to create new life in Christ.”

What can Christians do for the families of homosexuals?

It is tempting to ignore the problems and challenges associated with homosexuality. As God’s people, we are able to take actions that demonstrate love and concern for homosexuals

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and for their families.

While clearly affirming the sinfulness of homosexuality, we will also want clearly to affirm God's promise of forgiveness in Christ Jesus. Often families of homosexuals are embarrassed and ashamed. If Christian friends and relatives treat them in ways that increase this shame, it is little wonder that they will attempt to rationalize or otherwise explain away a son's or daughter's sinful lifestyle.

Christians should reach out in compassion to these families, expressing their love and concern, offering the encouragement that is ours in our Lord Jesus Christ.

To the person caught up in the homosexual life, Christian friends and family members should continue lovingly to share their convictions with this person, reaching out with the forgiving love of Christ and the hope that is found only in Him. Various organizations work with homosexuals who desire to turn away from the homosexual lifestyle. A Lutheran group working in this area is "Keys Ministry." Their address and telephone number are at the end of this pamphlet.

How should Christians respond to the "gay rights" movement?

There has been a growing increase in the influence of the "gay rights" movement, even within some Protestant churches. The "gay rights" movement wants our culture to accept homosexuality as an alternative natural lifestyle in which human beings may express their sexuality. We have reached the point where even the idea of "gay marriages" is considered an acceptable possibility. The church must resist these attitudes with the truth of God's Word.

Our church encourages our members to exercise their duty as Christian citizens to be aware and informed about these issues. The Christian citizen must be knowledgeable about the positions taken by politicians in regard to homosexuality, and other issues, so that responsible participation in the political process can take place.

The church is committed not to the political process, but to the preaching of the Gospel. This is the church's mission. The church does encourage its members to be responsible and active citizens in our country. Thus Christian citizens will work to enact laws that reflect Biblical truth in regard to homosexuality.

Why have some churches changed their position on homosexuality?

We have noticed changes particularly in many Protestant churches in our country when it comes to the issue of homosexuality. Even the national media has noticed these changes,

printing long stories on national church studies on the topics of homosexuality. Because the news media does not always distinguish carefully between Lutheran churches in the country, even our own members have sometimes wondered about the position of our Synod on these matters.

What accounts for these changes in some churches? First, homosexual groups within these churches often engage in "lobbying" efforts and gain considerable influence. Second and more important, attitudes toward homosexuality have changed as a result of changing attitudes toward the authority and reliability of the Holy Scriptures.

An academic philosophy about the Bible, called "higher criticism," puts man in the position of determining what is true and what is not in the Bible. With this attitude, we can understand why some churches have attempted to explain away the Bible's teaching about homosexuality.

How can Christians respond to attempts to make homosexuality appear as merely an alternative lifestyle?

All one has to do is turn on the television set and watch a few popular situation comedies to realize that there is an enormous effort underway to create an image of homosexuality as merely an alternative lifestyle. Homosexuality is portrayed as a perfectly normal and natural expression of human sexuality. Persons who view homosexuality as abnormal are portrayed in popular culture today as being "homophobic" or otherwise on the fringe of our society. It is therefore all the more important that Christians not hesitate to speak lovingly, yet clearly, about this issue. Parents need to take the time to discuss this issue with their children when they reach an age where they can understand these things.

What Lutheran resources are available to help minister to homosexuals and their families?

Keys Ministry is a Lutheran group dedicated to helping individuals and their families who are struggling with homosexuality. You may call Keys Ministry at (507) 352-4110. You may write to Keys at Box 97, Wykoff, MN 55990.

A study called "A Christian Perspective on Homosexuality" may be purchased by calling Concordia Publishing House at 800-325-3040 and requesting stock number 20-2586.

— Dr. A. L. Barry
President

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod