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Sharing Christ, Changing Lives



February



Lutheran Church Missouri Synod



2025

IN TOUCH WITH REDEEMER

A newsletter by and for the family of Redeemer Lutheran Church

Volume XXXV, Issue II

Recently on our For You Radio podcast, Luke wrote in asking about good works. After writing some very nice things about the podcast, he wrote about attending an evangelical college and what seems to be people's obsession with showing off their "good works." Remembering a discussion that Pastor Neujahr and I had on good works, he asked, "can a Christian actually "serve" God?"

This is such an interesting question. I mean, sure, it seems so basic on the surface, but it is actually profound. As I mentioned recently in a sermon, with AI and robotics, if a robot learns to recreate a meal so that it is an exact replica of the master chef's meal, who's the cook? Now, given that AI gets involved and starts improvising on said recipes and makes improvements, who is the true chef? Chef R2D2? We can chew on this together and its implications for the future of humanity another time – just don't go watch "Terminator" and assume that it is our future (but if you do come across a lady named Sarah Connor and Arnold Schwarzenegger is trying to kill her, maybe it is time to panic a little... besides, the future probably looks more like Wall-E. Lazy people floating around on loungers drinking a Slurpee.

Anyway – "Can a Christian actually serve God?" My response to Luke follows: I hope we can discuss this in greater detail in person...

One of the seminal documents on this topic is Luther's Heidelberg Disputation, which he wrote in 1518 – www.BookofConcord.org That always blows my mind because the theologies of grace are so amazingly well-developed. While it is a bit redundant at times, it is still very worthy of study, as is Dr. Steve Hein's book, "The Christian Life, Cross or Glory." 1517.org --> Bookstore

Aside from being one of my favorite human beings and a dear brother in Christ, Dr. Hein's book is liberating to the soul beaten down by the law that compels us to serve in order to be pleasing but liberates us to serve because we are already pleasing to God on account of Christ. We are free to serve or not, and Christ will still love us, but why would we not when we are faced with such an honor?

SERVING GROUPS

We have monthly serving groups and if you're not on the list and would like to be, contact the church office.

FEBRUARY

Deb Bremseth – 320-905-3078
Sarah Fosso – 320-894-3325

Deb Bremseth
John & Sharon Cola
Ryan & Sarah Fosso
Jeremy & Nichole Gleason
Keven & Diane Hillenbrand
Jamie Jackson
Nancy Klaassen
Ben Kopacek
Brad & Claudia Lenz
Brad Marcus
Nathan & Margaret Nielsen
Wayde & Sarah Olson
Tim & Stacy Pollock
Charlotte Roduner
Joseph & Katherine Schaeffbauer
Dave & Lynn Sherod
Jeff & LeAnn Stauffenecker
Tony & Kerry Texley

MARCH

Beth Corti – 320-231-1907

Alice Beckmann
Marcia Conklin
Lee & Beth Corti
Noah & Desrae Forst
Kim & Karen Heiden
Robert Hillenbrand
Ryan & Laura Jackson-Bjonfald
Robin Jacobson
Richard & Donna Johnson
Brandon & Chelsie Kopacek
Jeremy & Andria Krakow
Philip & Michelle Marcus
Mick & Heather Moyer
Cheryl Niss
Tom & Tracy Ost
Seth & Allison Pollock
Todd & Audrey Raap
Debra Rodelius
Brad & Suzanne Skindelien
Ted Wurm

NOTE: Please remember to contact your co-chair and ask them how you can be of assistance or just to let them know you are available.

SUN	ATTEND	COMM	ADULT	ELEM	H.S.	SHUTINS
Jan 5	173	144	37	15	2	
Jan 12	109		37	16	2	
Jan 19	111	90	29	10	2	
Jan 26	150		(Voter's Mtg)	13	1	
TOTALS	543	234	103	54	7	23
Out by death: Gary Schroeder						

LENTEN SUPPERS: Ash Wednesday is March 5th, so Lenten Suppers will begin. Please watch for a sign-up sheet in the next few weeks. Please prayerfully consider helping out at one of these meals.

CHOSEN VIDEO SEASON 2: The last Season 2 Chosen video will be on February 2nd. We will have potluck that night. Supper is at 5:00 pm with the video to follow. We look forward to seeing you there!

BUNCO: Get ready to roll those dice! We will have a fun evening of bunco on Friday, February 21. A light supper will be served at 6:00 pm, followed by lots of fun! If you have never played before, no worries -- you will pick it up quickly. If you are able, please consider bringing some bars or a snack to share that evening.

100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE: Redeemer will be celebrating their 100-year anniversary in 2027. If you are interested in helping to start planning this event, please let Deb Bremseth know by February 16, and then we will get a meeting set up based on schedules after that.

THE HAPPY QUILTERS meet at 12:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall every Monday! If you like to sew at home, there are squares available on the rack in the kitchen.

LERT TRAINING Become part of the Lutheran Early Response Team of volunteers, trained to respond in times of disaster. We will be having training here at Redeemer on May 3, 2025. Please sign up on church office window.

With Christian maturity, after a season of rebellion for most of us who have suffered under the law for too long, comes a place of living in the sunshine of grace, with a Gospel Sangria in hand and an attitude of joyful service when called upon to get off of our floaties, in the baptismal pool of mercy and lend our neighbor a hand. The joy truly comes when we can inflate a floatie for them, ease them into the water, and fill their cup of joy to overflowing with the grace of Christ.

"My yoke is easy, and my burden is light," says the Lord. Serving Christ may require our lives, but "to live is Christ; to die is gain." Those who trust in Christ, in maturity, more and more come to a place where we hold on to this life with a "loose grip," knowing that this is just the opening act that pales in comparison to that which is to come.

So "can a Christian actually serve God?" Why are you asking?

To please God? If you're baptized, you have been adopted into God's family, coated in Christ and He now only sees you for the righteousness of Christ (Galatians 3). You're already pleasing to Him, as Christ has imputed (credited) all of His righteousness to your bankrupt account. Relax, fix your eyes on Jesus and live a life of gratitude for His grace (unmerited favor on account of Christ).

Live under the complete sufficiency of His mercy, knowing that every sin you have and or will ever commit is forgiven already, and you will learn to finally and truly despise your sin because it nailed your Savior to the cross. THEN your heart will be broken, then you will finally despair of any goodness from within you, but you will discover Christ's infinite love, mercy, and grace for you, and God will use you for His glory... and you will not even find it to be work, but pure joy.

You may not even know that it has happened until it has happened.

It is amazing when someone says that something that I did or said impacted their life in a profound way, and I have no clue what they're talking about... then I can finally and truly Give God the glory because He has used me despite myself. It doesn't happen often, but when it does, I realize that the "Divine Fox" has had His way with me.

So, does a Christian do good works? Depends. Who is doing the work, you, or is the Lord doing the work, using you as a tool in his tool kit?

Soli Deo Gloria – Pastor Donofrio

Hello from the Preschoolers!

So far we've had a mild winter and the kids sure miss those snow hills to play on. It is one of their most favorite activities. We would like to send a special thank you to a friend in the congregation, they gave us a generous donation. We are talking with our board and figuring out a fun way to use this memorial gift.

Coming up in February we will be having Mom's Day. As before we like to do service projects with our preschoolers. This time we are partnering with Family Promise of Kandiyohi County. They have a wish list to help homeless families in our area. We are hoping that the congregation will partner with us to increase the amount of items collected. We will need the items by the 9th of February. The following is a list of items that would be beneficial to the families and there is a box in the church office for your donations. All of these items should be new.

**Bedding - Linens - Mattress Protectors - Personal Care Items
- Shampoo - Conditioner - Soap - Body Wash - Toothpaste -
Toothbrush - Deodorant - Razors - Feminine Products - Laundry
Detergent - Dryer Sheets - Diapers - Wipes - Baby Shampoo -
Baby Lotions - Pullups - First Aid Kits**

They have stressed that anything is helpful. And thank you in advance. We look forward to this challenge. Michelle and Gretchen

NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING IN NEW ORLEANS, LA.

6 youth and 2 adults will be attending NYG this year on July 19-23. Youth include Jack, Eva, and Stella Berghuis, Emma Fosso, Madison and Ellie Runke. Adult leaders will be Sarah Berghuis and Sarah Fosso. Held every 3 years since 1980, Redeemer first attended in 1995. The theme for the 2025 LCMS Youth Gathering is "ENDURE" and is centered around Hebrews 12:1-3. Please keep the NYG participants in your prayers to come together with thousands of youth and adults to be encouraged in their faith and Lutheran identity.

NOTE: NYG Lunch & Bible Study – Sunday, February 9th at 11:30 am.

DON'T FORGET TO SAVE YOUR SHOES! Don't like the shoes you have and want new ones? Don't throw your old ones away, bring them to church and put in the "Shoes For Missions" box that is located in the narthex. We take all kinds of shoes, boots, sandals, but . . . **NO FLIP FLOPS.** Art Bolland takes these shoes to Lutheran Island Camp where volunteers go through and sort all of them and put them in special bags. From there they are sent to a group called Funds2Orgs which gives camp 50 cents per pound! They fix the shoes up and send them on to third world countries to help people start up shoe selling businesses to raise money for their families. And it all starts with you bringing your shoes to Redeemer!

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS!! February collections will be "Hygiene Products". Eye Drops, Lip Balm, Saline Nasal Spray, Disposable Razors, Foot Powder, Multi-Vitamins, Vitamin C, Toothbrushes, Toothpaste, & Sunglasses. Please place donated items in box located in the narthex.

CHRISTIANITY 101

Join me, Pastor Donofrio, on Sundays at 9:15 am for our series on Martin Luther's Small Catechism. This is not just a chance to review and renew your knowledge of the Christian faith but also an exciting opportunity for personal growth and learning. Bring your questions about our doctrine and practices, and you may be pleasantly surprised at what you will discover. This class will also be for you if you haven't been confirmed in the Lutheran Church and would like to officially become a member of Redeemer Lutheran Church. There is something for everyone in this series!

Come and join me! Pr. Craig Donofrio

Listen to Pastor Craig on For You Radio. "The Gospel for the believer and the unbeliever, alike!" You can subscribe for free on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, or wherever you find your podcasts. You can also go to www.ForYouRadio.org to listen.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS is Sunday, February 9th at both services. Whether you are new to a board or serving your second year, please come up at the appointed time in the service.

LITTLE PEOPLE, BIG QUESTIONS

Towards the end of Sunday School opening last week, a preschool child was looking at the cross in the front of our church. He looked my way and asked a REALLY big question.

“When is Jesus coming back?”

Woah. Not quite the question I was expecting at 9:25 on a Sunday morning!

The answer, “I don’t know!” We talked about how the Bible says nobody knows except God. We don’t know the time or the day. It could be a short time; it could be a very long time. One thing the Bible does say is that we need to be ready. We need to live a life that brings God glory, a life that is so full of Jesus that other people cannot help but see Jesus in what we say and do.

Pull out your Bibles and read 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1.

Paul gives us a very important principle in this short section of scripture. Every part of our lives has the potential to give God glory. Everything we partake of or do should be pleasing to our Heavenly Father and point others to Him.

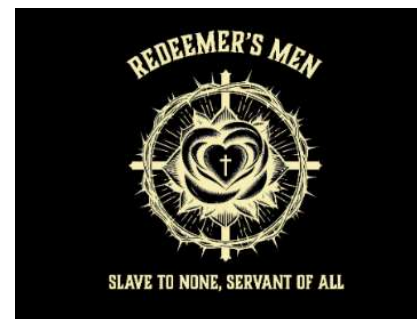
God calls us to glorify Him with *all* of our lives, not just Sunday mornings, not just in our devotional time at home. It is something we are supposed to do all of the time—when we eat, drink, sleep, play, work, and rest.

How does this look in your life? How are you showing this to your children each and every day? Maybe it’s praying before meals, at home and when you are out. It could be holding a door for the person after you. Giving God glory happens in those extremely tough times too, when it is hard to trust or hard to forgive. Our youth are watching us, learning how to give God glory in all situations. We are teaching them in the small things and the big things what it looks like to have a life so filled with Jesus that everyone around us can see Him through us.

We need to be ready. Our children, our grandchildren, and so many generations to come need to be ready. Christ will come again, and what a glorious day that will be!

Anna Barber

†† FEBRUARY 2025 ††		
WORSHIP SERVICES CAN BE HEARD IN THE PARKING LOT ON SUNDAYS BY TUNING TO FM STATION 101.9.		
	ELDERS	ACOLYTES
Feb 2 8:00 AM Communion 10:30 AM	Mark Sellmann, Michael Baumgarn Steve Lueders, Michael Baumgarn	Ellie Runke Kaylee Cordes
Feb 9 8:00 AM 10:30 AM	Stan Skaro Jim Malkuch	Elsa Fosso Charlie Berghuis
Feb 16 8:00 AM Communion 10:30 AM	Matt Akerson, Michael Baumgarn Brandon Kopacek, Michael Baumgarn	Elsa Fosso Amyah Hebrink
Feb 23 8:00 AM 10:30 AM	Mark Sellmann Jeff Pitt	Eli Forst Elise Reznecheck
USHERS (*Head Usher) 8:00 *Tim Pollock, Michael Gratz, Richard Johnson 10:30 *John Behl		LIBRARY Anita Petersen



REDEEMER'S MEN'S GROUP

The Redeemer Men’s Group will meet on Tuesday, February 25th for supper at 6 pm. Come join us!

HEY 7TH-12TH GRADE YOUTH! We will be having our February Youth Day at St. John, Atwater, on Sunday, February 23rd from 12-2:30 pm. Meet at church and we can carpool to Atwater and will plan to be back at church around 3 pm. It will be a day of pizza, games, and time in the Word! Please let Anna know if you can attend so that we can have enough adult drivers!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you." — Romans 1:8-9

It is truly a blessing to serve as the pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church. From the moment I arrived in Willmar, I have been deeply moved by the spirit of generosity and commitment to missions within this congregation. Whether sending Pastor Lo or others to foreign lands to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ or supporting families serving closer to home, Redeemer has always been ready and willing to share Christ's love through mission work.

Paula and I are overjoyed by your support as we embark on the exciting journey of helping establish the "Confessional Lutheran Church of Italy!" Currently, this ministry is primarily focused in Rome and Padua, with small house churches beginning to emerge across the country. The church in Rome, the largest at present, consists of only 30 members. While their journey will be challenging, with the Holy Spirit on their side, it promises to be a joyful and fruitful work.

The challenges facing the church in Italy are significant. Due to the influence of several cults, including the Mormons, the Italian government has placed strict regulations on non-Roman Catholic churches. These churches are required to meet in specific types of buildings with prescribed adornments, such as baptismal fonts and altars. As Lutherans, we meet these criteria, but the costs associated with these requirements are high. Your generous gift of the communion ware from Trinity Lutheran Church, Raymond, is a tremendous blessing, but as this fledgling denomination grows, they will continue to need our support.

This is where my role comes in. My primary task is to help them establish a strong online presence. With my background in radio and podcasting, I will work with their new pastors to create and expand a podcast ministry to build support for their Gospel work. This initiative not only spreads the Good News but also serves as a visible testament to their mission and a tool for garnering ongoing assistance.

SUMMER VACATION RENTALS: Looking for a place for your family reunion, family get away, etc.? Why not rent one of the cabins or homes that are available at Lutheran Island Camp this summer for your group. The prices for each facility are listed on the Lutheran Island Camp website. Make your reservations now for the summer before it's too late!

SUMMER BROCHURES ARE OUT! If you did not receive one, please check the summer schedule on Lutheran Island Camp's website. There is a camp for everyone, Little Lambs Camp, Art Camp, Fishing Camp, High School Camp, week-long camps, weekend camps, family camps, and more! Horse camp usually fills up fast, so plan to sign up early. Redeemer has scholarships available for you and your friends.

HOW FUN WOULD IT BE TO WORK AT CAMP! Check out their website for more information on these opportunities:

COUNSELOR/SUMMER STAFF: College aged students who would like to serve as a counselor, kitchen assistant, office assistant, wrangler, or groundskeeper.

JUNIOR COUNSELOR: Being a Junior Counselor is not a paid position, but it is a highly selective volunteer position. If you are 15-18 and have completed the 9th grade, you are welcome to apply.

YEAR-ROUND EMPLOYMENT: LIC is searching for a highly qualified individual to manage Christ Serve Ranch.

REDEEMER WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB will meet on February 8th at Middle Fork at 9 am to discuss "Unbroken" by Laura Hillenbrand. No need to sign up, just join us! Purchase, borrow or listen to the book as you prefer. If you need help getting a copy, contact Deb Krueger or Briana Jensen.

NEW TO YOU THRIFT STORE Do you donate items to the "New To You" store? If you do, just tell them to credit Redeemer Lutheran Church for your donation. Each quarter they add up that credit and send us gift cards which we can give to people in need. Those gift cards can then be used to purchase items from their store.

REDEEMER GIFT CARDS! Order gift cards for someone or yourself! Redeemer receives a percentage back in which you may apply to a Preschoolers tuition, to our Youth account or our General Education! No service fee! There are 140 stores and restaurants to choose from! Forms are located in the church office or the narthex! The deadline for this month is **Monday, February 10th.**

REDEEMER TRIVIA (From Our Historian's Desk)

Did you know . . .

*Pastor Luttman, Redeemer's pastor from 1932 to 1942, continued Pastor Volz's work in Benson, organizing St. Mark's church, and preaching there Sunday afternoons from 1935 to 1940. A chapel was built there in 1940 and the arrival of Rev. R. Albrecht as their resident pastor.

*The West Central Minnesota Lutheran Hour came into being over the Willmar radio station (KWLM) in 1941. A half-hour radio broadcast was every Sunday at 7 p.m. Pastors within a 50-mile area took turns preaching the Gospel.

*Pastor Luttman was the speaker on Sunday, December 7, 1941, when he was interrupted with the news that shocked the nation. Japan had bombed Pearl Harbor. Our nation plunged into World War II. Many of Redeemer's sons and daughters responded to the call of the Armed Service.

*During the time of Luttman's pastorate, 1932-1942, Redeemer had grown steadily from 53 communicants in 1932 to 160 in 1942.

*Rev. Erhard D. Eifert of Long Prairie accepted the call to become Redeemer's 3rd pastor. He was installed on November 22, 1942.

*Pastor Eifert's salary was \$1400 a year and the use of the parsonage. The Eifert Family brought with them a reputation as talented singers, and he soon became known in the community as "The Music Pastor."

*Under the lay leadership of Herman Belter, the congregation was legally incorporated in October 1944.

FAMILY OF THE WEEK! We are selecting two Redeemer families to pray for each Sunday in our worship services. Watch for a letter in the mail prior to the Sunday that we will pray for you and your loved ones.

I will also document the founding and ordination of these pastors, deliver gifts that will enhance their worship, and participate in their ordination ceremonies. In addition, I will bring recording and podcasting equipment to help them reach a broader audience. Upon returning, I hope to inspire continued excitement and involvement in Redeemer's partnership with the Saints in Italy.

Looking ahead, we hope to establish or partner with a mission society that will further support this work in Italy, as well as expand to other fields like Pakistan and beyond, wherever the Lord leads.

Please keep these new pastors—Lorenzo, Luiz, and Joshua—in your prayers as they prepare for ordination and the vital task of proclaiming the Gospel across Italy. May our Lord Jesus Christ grant them courage, strength, and protection as they take up this sacred ministry.

In Christ's love, Pastor Craig

If you would like to help sponsor Pastor Craig & Paula with this mission trip to Italy this May, your donation would be greatly appreciated. Please earmark your gift as "Pastor's Mission Trip".

ALTAR GUILD MEETING The Altar Guild will meet on Thursday, February 13th at 5 pm. If you're maybe interested in joining our group and want to see what we are all about, come join us!



YOUTH IN THE NEWS!



NLS student Andrew Sandau wrestled in the 121-pound match in a non-conference dual on January 21st in Willmar.

Andrew Sandau, far right, as he's ready to take the plunge at the Spicer Polar Plunge on January 25th.



MACCRAY's FFA Conduct of Chapter Meetings team secured a spot on the state conference podium at the state competition in St. Cloud. Emma Fosso is front row, center.



Passing some US Figure Skating Tests was Abby Behl, PrePreliminary Singles and Preliminary Skating Skills.

LWML NEWS

Greetings LWML Ladies and Redeemer Ladies,

Once again, I would like to extend an invitation for you to join us at our February 11 potluck and meeting beginning at 5:30 pm. You really don't want to miss the fabulous Bible Study that Pastor Renstrom so graciously leads us in!

This month, we are focusing on the upcoming National Convention in late June of 2025 in Omaha. Please look at your calendars and come prepared to make a commitment so we can get registered and secure housing.

If you are unable to attend the meeting, but know you would like to attend the Convention, please email me at brooke.sellmann@gmail.com.

God's blessings,

Brooke Sellmann, chair

PS - Remember we follow Willmar Public Schools inclement weather protocol.

BETHESDA SERVICE

Pastor Donofrio has a worship service with communion in the Carrie chapel at Bethesda on the third Monday of each month at 1 pm. This is being offered to our members and other LCMS people that reside at Bethesda. If you're interested in joining us, our next service is February 17th.

POTLUCK!

Our next potluck is Sunday, February 16, following second service. Please grab something to bring and join us! We would love to socialize and get to know you all better.

DID YOU MOVE? Make sure you tell the church office. The post office charges us if they have to tell us your new address!