

Desert Reflections

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**LUTHERAN CHURCH OF
THE RISEN SAVIOR**

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**Sunday Worship Themes -
February**

- 5th: "Living Water for Life"
John 4:5-14
- 12th: "God's People --- God's
Work"
John 4:31-38
- 19th: "Godly 'Signs and
Wonders'"
John 4:46-54
- 26th: "Authority --- for the
Sake of the Church"
John 17:1-12

*We invite you to read, pray
and prepare for each time of
worship.*

jws

The Prayer Pretzel

The story is told of a frugal lay brother working in the Alps on the French-Italian border in the year AD610. He was baking bread in the monastery, and some was left. He folded over the strips of dough to represent arms crossed in prayer, and, eventually, he gave them to children who had learned their prayers.

These gifts of dough were called "pretiola," Latin for "little gifts"; in time, this became the word "pretzel." In 1861, the first commercial pretzel bakery in America opened in Pennsylvania. Next time you see or eat a pretzel, use it as a reminder to fold your hands or arms in prayer.

And --- look for little "prayer pretzels" at your place at our Lent suppers. Folded hands or arms are a beautiful position of humility and dependence, testifying to the readiness of God's children to speak to the Lord and listen to Him.

**Lent Begins Ash Wednesday ---
22 February with Divine Services**

The holy Season of Lent, the "Great 40 Days," begins February 22nd with Divine Services at **5:00 and 7:00 PM**. In addition to special music and message, we will celebrate the Lord's Supper and receive the Imposition of Ashes. All are invited. There will be a brief morning devotion, with imposition of ashes, at 8:00AM that morning.

Opportunities for Individual Confession and Absolution will be offered on **Shrove Tuesday, February 21st, from 2-4PM and 6-8PM**. Anyone wishing to make individual confession is invited to meet with Pastor Stieve in the chancel area close to the communion rail. If someone is with him when you come, please wait in a rear pew.

The next five Wednesdays, 29 February – 28 March, **one** midweek service will be conducted, at **5:30PM**, with a light supper to follow. We encourage you to spend these extra, and special, moments with us in worship.

The theme for our Lenten services is **God's Gift of Forgiveness**. During our year of "Mercy" emphasis, this is most fitting and appropriate. Please join us each Wednesday, as we consider and appreciate our Savior and what He does for us!

S.O.U.L. Says, "Happy 100th Anniversary, LCMS English District!"

Special thanks to John Krueger, Pastor Stieve, and Deaconess Jeri for sharing their knowledge and experience with this unique district within the larger LCMS ministries at the S.O.U.L. Lunch on Thursday, January 12, 2012. We are truly blest to be part of the mercy ministry and outreach focus of our non-geographical district.

Risen Savior launched its new mercy ministry in response to the 100th Anniversary called S.O.U.L. Lunch (Sharing **O**ur **U**nconditional **L**ove.) What a joy it was to see and hear our fellow members talking, laughing, and sharing a delicious lunch together. January 19th brought local clergy and community leaders to LCRS fellowship hall to join our congregational leaders for lunch and an introduction to this new ministry.

February 9, 2012 from 11:00AM–12:30PM is the first S.O.U.L. Lunch open to our members, as well as anyone in the community. Please come join us ...maybe you know someone who eats alone and would enjoy some conversation with lunch.

"Where two or three are gathered together in My name..."

LCRS S.O.U.L. Lunch Ministry Team

The Parson's Paragraphs

New Year – new activities – new opportunities – new challenges . . . and many new ways to live and show the “mercy” of the Lord! I pray our theme word for the year will be meaningful to you --- and lead you to reflect on and more fully appreciate our Lord of mercy.

Never wishing to pass-up an opportunity to ‘play’ with words, I noted a connection with our Year of St. John’s Gospel and our theme word. “It’s About Mercy” --- I AM! As we read, study, consider and appreciate the “I AM” God, and the “I am” statements of our Lord Jesus, we will know more fully the mercy of our Lord. However, this is not simply a word or study. You and I need to “live it,” as we carry on our daily lives. Please think and pray about three areas where the “Mercy” of Christ can come alive in us.

It's About MERCY!

First, S.O.U.L. Lunch Ministry. This has been “tested” with members and community leaders. Now, as they say, “It’s Showtime!” Please pray for and about this new and vital ministry – showing our Lord’s love, care and compassion for all people. I hope many of our members will take part in this (eating & assisting), and I pray for neighbors and yet-unmet friends who will join us for lunch ... but also receive a welcome, and the love of Christ! Please consider how you might become active in S.O.U.L.

Second, we desire to spread the Gospel, but we rarely see people in worship who have been brought by a member. This is not about our ABLAZE! Candle; it is about souls for whom Christ died who do not currently seem to have the “felt need” to worship Him with others. Please pray, befriend, approach, interact, and invite! This does not take a committee, task force or team. This takes loving, caring, committed Christian people. If you wish information, advice or materials, please speak with me.

Third, please give thought and prayer toward writing for our Lent devotions booklet. Each year, we are blessed with meaningful and inspirational thoughts from our members, as we conduct our Lenten devotions. The emphasis/theme will be “Mercy” (*no surprise!*), but you are not limited to that theme. Remember, in Holy Scripture, “mercy” is also “loving kindness” and “steadfast love.” Please give this consideration ... and submit one or more (about 150 words + a prayer) to the church office by the 40th Day of Christmas (or Ground Hog Day ☺).

A blessed season of Epiphany. As the Light of Christ shines throughout this world of sinful darkness, let His Light shine in and through you, in words and deeds --- all to the glory of God!

John Wm Stieve

“Following Christ into People’s Lives”

Light in the Darkness

The Lord My Shepherd

Ah, now here is a name of God with which I am certain you are at least somewhat familiar. What does it mean to be a shepherd? Well, nothing, unless the shepherd has sheep.

There are many times throughout Scripture that we are referred to as sheep. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." John 10:27 "Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." Psalm 100:3 "All we like sheep have gone astray..." Isaiah 53:6a

In her book, "Lord I Want to Know You", Kay Arthur writes, "Sheep are the dumbest of all animals. They are helpless, timid, and feeble. They require constant attention and meticulous care. Sheep have little means of self-defense." So much for our self-esteem! But, if you think about it— it's a true description of our condition apart from Christ. Ava Pennington wrote " [A shepherd] is gentle and caring, and he know each of his sheep by name. But, a good shepherd is also strong and fierce when necessary. He is the first and only line of defense for his sheep..."

Jesus says of Himself, "I am the Good Shepherd..." You can read through Psalm 23 and list the many things He does for us. None of which we can do on our own. Does this 'ring any bells' for you? For me, I am reminded of the explanation of the first Article of the Apostle's creed: "He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life."

It is quite obvious that the vocation of Good Shepherd (Jesus) has a distinct job description. He knows Who He is, Whose He is, and what He is to do— and He does it without fail or flub. Sequentially, we learn Who He is and what we can expect from Him. I challenge you, dear reader, to also fulfill your sheeplly vocation. It is our responsibility to follow our Shepherd, receive His provisions of Word and Sacrament, and to respect the shepherd leaders (Pastors, government, etc) He places over us. I pray that, as we begin this season of Lent, that we would seek to further develop our relationship with our Savior. One opportunity would be to study the Gospel according to John with us this year. There is a personal, daily study/ prayer guide for a 'doable' 42 days of readings for only \$6. These will be ordered February 2. There is also an optional small group study component. Day and time will be announced. Please sign up in the Narthex.

1st Tuesday Women's Bible Study

"I Love to Tell the Story" is a study about Rahab, Anna, and the Samaritan Woman. As we consider various verses of Scripture, we will hear their stories of faith, and contemplate our own. Study guides will be available in the Narthex before our class meets on February 7th at 10:00 AM in the Fellowship Hall.

Soup-er Bowl Sunday: Feb. 5th

A special door offering is taken on Super Bowl Sunday for people who are in need. This year we are going to give to LSS-SW Refugee and Resettlement services.

"Refugees are men, women, and children who are forced to flee their homes, leaving behind all they have known for an uncertain future. Refugees are among the most vulnerable of all immigrants fleeing countries that have been ravaged by civil strife or war. Comprehensive resettlement and adjustment services are provided with an emphasis on helping refugee families access the necessary resources to become self-sufficient and successfully integrate into their new communities as quickly as possible. With national and local support, refugees receive the basic necessities for starting life anew. " (A portion of the description from the web page <http://lss-sw.org/refugee-immigration>.)

Following Christ into People's Lives,

Deaconess Jeri

“Catch the Vision – Share the Story”



“For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.” Matthew 13.17

When Jesus spoke the parable of the Sower and the Seed, the disciples asked our Lord, “Why do you speak (to the crowds) in parables?” Verse 17 is part of Jesus’ response. You have probably heard that our faith is caught, not taught. As Lutherans, we cannot help but say, “It is both.”

Fair enough. But if our actions are not consistent with our words, people will not listen to us and our words become empty. I have heard it this way, “Your actions speak so loudly, I can’t hear a word you’re saying.”

The point is that the practice of our faith is contagious, a fit analogy in the middle of the cold and flu season. And faith is catching. When someone sees you coming regularly to church, they catch it. When someone sees that you are going to Bible study on Sunday or during the week, they catch it. When someone sees you bring a friend to a special event at church or to a worship service, they catch it. They notice.

Whatever it is that God has laid on your heart for you to practice your faith, when you do it “as unto the Lord”, the Kingdom of God is growing. It may be helping a friend with a project. Meeting with someone to pray for them. Sending an unexpected valentine. Volunteering for ministry, even if it takes you out of your comfort zone.

Catching the vision begins by showing up!

“Catch the Vision – Share the Story.”

This is the title of the Capital Stewardship Campaign at Gracepoint. My hope is that this journey will be about more than fundraising and a building. During this process, I hope that everyone at Gracepoint and many at Risen Savior, will catch the vision of what God has planned for our ministry in Sahuarita and beyond. I hope that we will see what “many prophets and righteous people longed to see,” – that God is in our midst, sowing, nurturing, growing and reaping all kinds of seed, in all kinds of soil. Again, sometimes catching the vision is as simple as showing up.



There is much work ahead. Planting a church is not easy. But just think about the story we will be able to share at the end of it! Faith is caught, before it can be taught. May the people God is reaching out to, see us practicing our faith as we begin our campaign and may they catch the vision too.

All to the glory of Christ! † Pr. Steve

Ninth Annual LCRS Women's Retreat

The purpose of the Women's Retreat is to bring women together for the purpose of sharing with other women what God is His wisdom and love has done in our lives, so that relationships can be built, our faith can be strengthened and our lives can be rejuvenated and enriched, that all may know that who we are today and will be forever is to the Glory of God the Father. With the Grace of God this will be accomplished through worship and song, fellowship, bible study and sharing.



"Patience – Better 'Wait' than 'Never'"

"But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

Isaiah 40:31 (ESV®)

Saturday, February 18, 2012

Continental Breakfast served at 8:30 a.m. – Retreat runs from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Speaker and Study Leader: Phyllis Wallace

Phyllis is a wife, mother of four, author and former family counselor and educator. Her path into public speaking began as a junior high counselor involved with youth on drugs. Once her children were grown, she led a weekly Bible study of 100 women from 14 different church backgrounds for ten years. This opened opportunities to keynote conferences and seminars around the country. In 1991, she initiated the "Woman to Woman" program on KFYO-AM radio in St. Louis, MO. This show was picked up by Lutheran Hour Ministries in 1993 and was eventually syndicated to 400 stations. After doing over 1400 interviews, Phyllis retired from "Woman to Woman" in August, 2011.

Music Leader: Dr. Ji Sun Lee

Dr. Lee is Music Director at Lutheran Church of the Risen Savior. She was born in Seoul, South Korea, where she began her music education at age 4. A pianist and organist, Dr. Lee holds degrees from Presbyterian College, Seoul, South Korea, Arizona State University and the University of Arizona. She has performed internationally and has won top honors in several competitions. She has taught at Cochise College, Sierra Vista, AZ. and at the University of Arizona. Ji Sun and her husband, Michael Lich, a classical guitarist with whom she often performs in concerts, reside in Tucson.

Registration fee includes Continental breakfast and catered lunch. Please bring your Bible.

-----Please return to Lutheran Church of the Risen Savior -----

Registration Form -- Women's Retreat February 18, 2012

Name

Address

Phone

_____ \$20.00 Registration Fee Enclosed (make checks payable to LCRS)

_____ I would like to sponsor _____ individual scholarships @ \$20.00 each

Do you have any special dietary restrictions? _____

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Have a Heart

February: the month devoted to love. Stores are filled with heart-shaped boxes of candy and heart-shaped cards and vases of flowers with heart-shaped gift tags. All this is available for the consumer so that he can find the appropriate expression of his devotion to his loved one. If that expression of love has been preceded by a year of thoughtful and loving words and deeds, it is welcomed and cherished by the recipient. If not, it is just an empty ritual, done out of duty rather than true devotion.

Our relationship to the Lord is similar. He, too, desires our sincere devotion, not empty lip service. *“The Lord says: ‘These people come near to Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me’ ”* (Isaiah 29:13).

Stewardship is serving, helping, giving, but love is the basis for stewardship. Without love, our good deeds are empty and without merit. The first act of true stewardship is to *“love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength”* (Deuteronomy 6:5). Jesus called this the most important commandment (Mark 12:29, 30). With that love for the Lord in us, we are enabled to be good stewards. Then we can do acts of good stewardship, acts of true devotion. We are enabled to . . .

- *“Give generously to Him and do so without a grudging heart”* (Deuteronomy 15:10).
- *“Carefully observe [His decrees and laws] with all your heart and with all your soul”* (Deuteronomy 26:16).
- *“Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality”* (Romans 12:13).
- *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men”* (Colossians 3:23).

God, through Ezekiel, promised, *“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit in you and move you to follow My decrees and be careful to keep My laws”* (Ezekiel 36:26-27). This promise He has fulfilled in His Son, Jesus, Who has followed His Father’s decrees and kept His laws for us. As we strive to live fruitful lives of stewardship, at the same time, we rest in Christ Who has been the perfect steward for us.

A Call to Discipleship – Men’s Conference

Friday-Saturday, February 17-18, a men’s conference will be held at the Green Valley Evangelical Free Church. Conference speaker is the Rev. Philip “Skip” Gray. He is a graduate of Wheaton College and a staff member of Navigators for fifty-nine years.

Skip will lead the group into Jesus’ definition of discipleship. He will focus on a disciple-making “curriculum,” as outlined by St. Paul – noting that true discipleship has its cost.

For those who register by February 7th, there is no fee. After the 7th, there will be a \$25.00 fee to attend. A freewill offering will be taken during the conference to cover food costs and a speaker honorarium.

The conference begins at 6:00PM Friday evening and concludes at 3:00PM Saturday afternoon. The church is at 1393 W. Mission Twin Buttes Road – west of Camino del Sol.

There are registration forms and information in the church narthex. You are invited to attend!

MEN’S PROSTATE WELLNESS GROUP TO FEATURE DR. MICHAEL MORAN, M.D. AS SPEAKER

Date: Friday, Feb. 10th, Time: 7:30 a.m. (Note this time change!)

For the month of February, the group will depart from its regular individual-sharing format to host last year’s popular speaker, Dr. Michael Moran, MD, local urologist, surgeon and fellow of the Arizona Urological Institute. Dr. Moran will speak on new medicines for prostate cancer and take questions from the audience. Moran is an articulate, knowledgeable, and entertaining speaker and we look forward to his return this month.

The meeting will be held at Desert Hills Lutheran Church, 2150 S. Camino del Sol, in Fellowship Hall. Complimentary refreshments will be available. Come join us! Contact: Dave Schmidt, 399.0154.