

FROM THE PASTOR:

When you receive this C.P.R., "Christ's People Report", newsletter, Ann and I will have returned from our trip to Germany, walking in Martin Luther's footsteps, and being in Wittenburg on Reformation Sunday, where the Protestant Church was begun some 494 years ago! It was beautiful! The people with whom we fellowshiped were great! The sharings in faith had great depth and meaning! The adventure was invigorating!

But in this month of Thanksgiving Day, we are most thankful for again being home - in our homeland, the good ol' U.S.A.! The Lord has so greatly blessed us as a nation, and a people, that it's only fitting that we have a national holiday set aside to do just that, and our worship service on Thanksgiving Day, November 24th, at 10:00 a.m., with Holy Communion, to praise and thank Him for our Founding Fathers being empowered by Him to establish us "as one nation under God".

And at the end of this Thanksgiving month, we begin to prepare for our

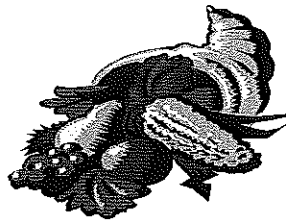
Lord's coming in the flesh, His coming in power, and His coming in triumphant celebration on the Last Day as the Advent Season begins on the 27th of November, with midweek Advent Services on Wednesdays (Nov. 30, Dec. 7, and Dec. 14) at 7 p.m. "Advent" means "to come" and so the Lord would want us "to come with the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4), "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II Cor. 4:6).

It's good to be with family and to come together with thanksgiving for God's goodness to us all. Be with family - either going to where they are, or inviting them here to be with you. Wherever you are, be sure to gather as God's family of faith to give Him thanks for the goodness He has poured out on us all. A blessed November to each of you.

In this Thankfulness,
Pastor Koehler

Redeemer Lutheran Church

5120 Harrison Rd.
Fredericksburg, VA 22408
540-898-4748
E-mail: info@embracedbyHim.org
Website: www.embracedbyHim.org



Christians Aren't "Sinners"

Some of you may have heard me talk about this subject, so if you have, please forgive my redundancy. However, this is a topic yet gnawing away at me, because I've been noticing more and more its recurring presence.

If Church-going Joe is asked, "Why do we sin," his answer inevitably returns, "Because we're sinners." The tone that commonly accompanies such reasoning suggests that this is the most rational explanation in the world. "We sin because we're sinners." But it's not rational. It's ludicrous.

In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Paul identifies a sinner by his or her misdeeds and labels them as such. Someone who commits idolatry is an idolater. Someone who steals is a thief. Someone who swindles is a swindler. The title identifies the person according to their deeds. Essentially, Paul says a sinner is one who is known by the sin they commit, and they "will not inherit the kingdom of God."

So let me ask you, are you part of the kingdom of God? Do you grasp hold of the gift of salvation given you in Christ? Are you one of the Saved? Hopefully, your answer is a resounding, "Yes!" Where, then, fits the identity of "sinner?" The two are incompatible, because the unrighteous "will not inherit the kingdom of God."

Indeed, Paul directly states that some of his readers *were* characterized this way, but are no longer (v.11). They were "washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of Jesus by the Spirit of God." If you're baptized, you can claim nothing different. You are no longer known according to your sin. So if you aren't a sinner, who are you?

2 Corinthians 5:21 calls you "the righteousness of God" in Christ. You are no longer identified by what *you* do but rather by what *Christ* has done for you (Eph. 2:8-9). Your identity is Christ's identity (Col. 3:3). The very abandonment of the title, "sinner," necessitates the abandonment of a life of sin.

Please note the title of this article is not "Christians Don't Sin." I'm not claiming we don't sin. I'm claiming we are not *identified* by our sin. Our identity is in Christ. A Christian saying "I've sinned," is not the same as them saying, "I'm a sinner." One is a confession; the other is lunacy, a contradiction in terms.

Most often, the phrase, "I'm a sinner," among Christians is simply a white flag. A tap out. A submission. "I give up trying to live righteously because that's just not who I am." It's an excuse disguised as humility, and it ultimately only serves as a license to continue in sin. In truth, it's not admirable. It's shameful, and as we previously established, it's nonsense.

Call it splitting hairs. Call it semantics. I call it destruction of a toxic worldview that has permeated God's people for far too long. We are not sinners. We are the righteousness of God. A "Christian sinner" makes about as much sense as a "firefighting arsonist." The deeds don't match the identity.

God does not know you as "sinner." "Such were some of you, but you were washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." You are the "righteousness of God" in Christ Jesus. May the Holy Spirit guide your deeds according to your new identity.

Sincerely in Christ Alone,
The Vicar

FROM OUR ASSISTANT PASTOR:

As the days get shorter and its gets colder outside at this time of year through the readings on Sunday and both our Church and secular holidays I find myself reflecting on God's goodness and all that He has done to preserve, provide for, and prosper those whom I love. As we get closer to celebrating Thanksgiving each year I try to look back and give thanks, which can be easier with some of the experiences that have happened that with others. As you take the time to reflect on how your life has gone over the past year, where have you spent your time, where have you spent your treasure, what is it that has been most important to you? Mathew writes, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also", in Chapter 6:21.

What we treasure is what we value; time spent growing in faith and our relationship with Christ, time with family and friends, advancement and achievement at work. Where we spend our time and we value shows the world what we have made most important. In these difficult financial times it is easy to become caught up in worrying about job security, focusing on earning respect and financial gains, because that is something that we can value in the here and now. Insecurity, fear, worry all are ways that we are turned away from God's Kingdom and the gifts that he has bestowed upon us. Gifts that are not really our, gifts which really belong to God, as is illustrated so well through the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14-30, gifts which we hold in trust.

A few months ago Wayne presented the "Kids, Parents, and Money Matters" program at Redeemer to the adults, while Cheryl and Irene worked with the kids to add to the tools we have in how we use and speak about money in our lives and with our children. That program will be offered again at the Ladysmith Public Library, November 14th, 6-8pm at the Ladysmith Public Library. If you missed it last time it was presented, or you have friends with children who would benefit from participating in the program please let them know about it.

In this world there is a contest for our hearts and where we place our trust and what it is that becomes most valuable for each of us. The Devil and the world are trying to lead us away from God's Kingdom and have us focus on the fulfillment of selfish needs and desires. As we celebrate Thanksgiving this month, and look towards the generous gift that has been given by the birth of our Savior that we will celebrate next month, reflect and give thanks for what you value, what treasures God has entrusted to your care.

In His Grip,
Rob

Embraced by Christ will be sponsoring the "Kids, Parents, and Money Matters" program November 14th, 6-8pm at the Ladysmith Public Library. This presentation is designed for parents and children ages 6-10 that will teach kids about money and values, practical ways to make teaching about money fun, and developing responsible money habits. To register call Wayne Sprick at 866.786.4620 or email him at wayne.sprick@thrivent.com. Refreshments will be served.

As we continue our prayers for Outreach in India, we are beginning to narrow our focus to a specific place in Tamil Nadu, India. The Outreach Board has sent them a letter and we will share it with you once a response has been received. We ask that you keep the 7 teachers and 250 students of the IELC Middle School, Mailpatti in your prayers. Mailpatti is a small village near the town of peranambattu. They are in need of teaching materials and latrines at this time.

From the Chair of Finance and Stewardship:

I apologize; I missed the deadline for July's report, so here is July and August numbers

| | JULY | AUGUST |
|---|---------|-----------|
| CHURCH OPERATING BUDGET | \$51166 | \$51166 |
| OPERATING BUDGET CONTRIBUTIONS | \$51692 | \$37592 |
| SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)FROM BUDGET | \$526 | (\$13574) |
| OPERATING BUDGET ACTUAL EXPENDITURES | \$50957 | \$45876 |
| SURPLUS/ DEFICIT FROM ACTUAL EXPENDITURES | \$209 | (\$8284) |

So, through August we have a deficit of \$2188 for the year. This is the first time this year that we have fallen into a deficit and we are out of the summer "doldrums" so I expect that we will at least balance out for the year if not have a surplus of contributions over expenses.

Mike Evenson
Chair of Finance and Stewardship

OUR SOCIAL MINISTRIES was blessed by the Lord with some resources to be able to help the following families who telephoned us from the community this past month:

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| 12 families with their utilities | \$ 781.23 |
| 3 families with water/sewer | 185.00 |
| 1 family with rent assistance | 100.00 |
| <u>1 cong. family in need</u> | <u>434.00</u> |
| 17 families with 33 children | \$1500.23 |

We can continue to receive almost 400 calls for help each month. We say "No" to more than we can say "Yes"; but those we help are telling me that we're the only ones who have been able to say "Yes" to them. Pray with us that all churches in our area are blessed by the Lord to be able to help more of these families in need.

Christmas Tea
December 3, 2011

For all ladies 3 – 103
(Look for your invitations in the mail)

Table Decorators Needed

The fellowship hall is transformed into a beautiful setting for a Christmas Tea. That transformation is because of you! Please share in decorating a table for the tea.

Contact – Cheryl Durham
familylife@embracedbyhim.org

540.898.4748

RSVP as decorator by Nov. 20th



Our thanks to our members for their help during the month of November:

USHER SCHEDULE - Early

- Nov. 5 - Ed Grandowski (Lead)
Tom Church, Jason Biscamp, Mike Evenson
- Nov. 12 - Ken Petermann (Lead)
Jim Pittman, Kirk Hymes, Dave Hunter
- Nov. 19 - Ed Grandowski (Lead)
John Uschold, Don Schumann, Mike Weiland
- Thanksgiving Day - Volunteers Needed**
- Nov. 26- Mike Bush (Lead)
Tom Barlow, Dave Bye, David Rhodes

If you are unable to usher on your assigned date, please arrange for your replacement. ****Note**** Additional ushers are welcome to participate in this important ministry. Contact Tom Barlow, 1st Service Coordinator, 804-742-5315.

USHER SCHEDULE - Late

- Nov. 6 - Glenn Weaver, Mark Fife, Greg Brown
- Nov. 13 - R.O.M.A.N.S.
- Nov. 20 - Mark Fife, Jerry Limerick, Mike Diederer
- Nov. 27 - Ted Smith, John Hinz, Mike Mullinax,
Ken Billings

Volunteers needed! Please call Mark Fife, 2nd Service Coordinator, 786-2336 and leave a message or email to chofudgeman1@yahoo.com if you can help.

ACOLYTE SCHEDULE FOR NOVEMBER

EARLY:

- Nov. 6 - Miqueas Vigil/Zechariah Vigil
- Nov. 13 - Devon Montgomery/Maeve Montgomery
- Nov. 20 - Eric Weiland/Tyler Fehrman
- Nov. 27 - Hayley Groover/Abigail Durham

LATE:

- Nov. 6 - Tion Edmonds/Trejon Edmonds
Crucifer - Philip Wiltenmuth
- Nov. 13 - Kacey Schwenzer/Emma Leidy
Crucifer - Cara Gasperoni
- Nov. 20 - Christian Hovda/Joaiah Koehler
Crucifer - Mathew Zimmerman
- Nov. 27 - Philip Wiltenmuth/Tion Edmonds
Crucifer - Trejon Edmonds

LAY READERS:

- Nov. 6 - Ed Minnich (E) - I John 3:1-3
- Nov. 13 - Linda Karpiscak (L) - I Thess. 5:1-11
- Nov. 20 - Sharon Evenson (E) - I Cor. 15:20-28
- Nov. 27 - Candace Wiltenmuth (L) - I Cor. 1:3-9

AVERAGE WEEKLY ATTENDANCE IN SEPTEMBER:

| | Church | Sun. Sch. |
|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 2011 | 320 | 141 |
| 2010 | 341 | 155 |
| 2005 | 295 | 138 |
| 2000 | 245 | 130 |
| 1980 (1st yr.) | 53 | 40 |

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS:

1 - Amy Biel
 1 - Holly Thomas
 1 - Matt Bogle
 2 - Aiden Koehler
 2 - Margaret Viadero
 5 - David Rhodes
 5 - Amber Biel
 6 - Cheryl Durheim
 6 - John Hinz
 6 - Tom Thomas
 6 - Brandy Kondaki
 7 - John Sullivan
 8 - Susan Bugg
 8 - Donna Verbosky
 8 - Jacob Kondaki

10 - Les Wagner
 10 - Hope Miller
 11 - John Karpiscak

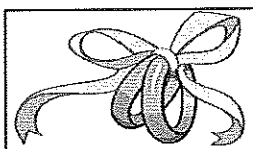


11 - Cindy Pagan
 11 - Linda Church
 12 - Jeff Whitt

12 - Kathy Bogle
 13 - Kristan Jedlicka
 14 - Thomas Brown
 14 - Laura Lewis
 16 - Jane Nordbeck
 18 - Howard Kohl
 19 - Scott Biel
 20 - Nicki Kelley
 21 - Steve Schwenzer
 21 - Andrew Rayne
 22 - Dolores Jenkins
 24 - Craig Ashby
 26 - Kurt Carlson
 27 - Bill Floyd
 28 - Cheryl Thompson

NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES:

5 - Mark & Wanda Fife
 10 - Jim & Carol Dixon
 15 - Jim & Gladyn Lumb
 15 - Joseph & Suzanne Hibbs

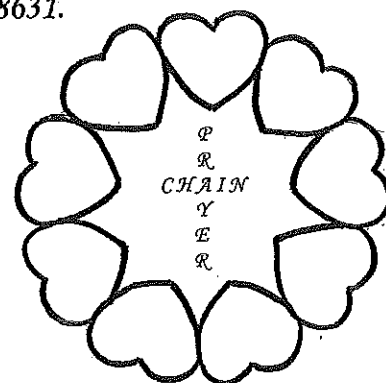


18 - Rich & Michelle Gasperoni
 29 - Don & Barbara Roose
 30 - Ralph & Claudine Wilcox

You are invited to be a part of our congregation's Prayer Chain Ministry. Prayer is the heart of its mission. The prayer chain serves as "a network of individuals who receive prayer requests and thanksgivings, forwards them to the next available person in the network, and prays immediately for each request." A prayer chain is "the spiritual alarm system which communicates and takes prayerful action."

Our prayer chain uses the telephone as the tool for passing along the prayer request from one prayer partner to another. This is a great opportunity to uphold others and bring them before the Lord in prayer. You will be a blessing by giving them the comfort of your praying hands and heart. If you have a desire to be an instrument of His will, and make a difference in people's lives, please contact Cindy Anderson at (540) 785-8631.

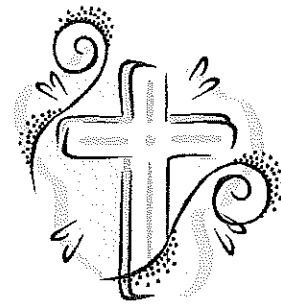
"In all things... Pray."



FaithKeeping Event

Saturday, November 19th, 1pm – 4pm

Redeemer Fellowship Hall



What is a FaithKeeping Event?

It's a time to come together with others and learn ways to creatively record your own and your family's faith journey. You'll find many ideas for creative, meaningful projects that are faith-focused and family-centered and will encourage growth in your faith walk and teach you how to pass on your faith legacy to future generations.

November's Project - "Clipboard Christmas Countdown"

We will create a Christmas/Advent Countdown Calendar using a clipboard. You will also receive an extensive list of daily activity ideas for the Christmas/Advent season.

At this FaithKeeping you will also get to see several creative ideas for homemade gifts, home décor items, and gift wrapping ideas. Written project tutorials for these ideas will be available.

All materials to complete one project are provided. Any level crafter is welcome.

All ages welcome - any children must be accompanied by an adult.

To see an example of the countdown project, go to: <http://karenscrips.blogspot.com>

You may choose to complete the featured project, or work on your own projects/scrapbook. You are also welcome to bring any of your tools, adhesives, and other materials that you use for scrapbooking or crafting. Past projects and other FaithKeeping ideas will be displayed for inspiration. Any level of crafter is welcome - there is help available. The projects are great for personal use or for gift giving.

Cost is \$5 - includes use of supplies and materials for one project and snacks/drinks

Sign up on the FaithKeeping clipboard outside the secretary's office or

Contact Karen Hunter with questions: 972-1065 or kahdah95@comcast.net.

