



The Reporter

July-August 2015

The Reporter

Volume 13, Issue 07

In this Issue:

State Churches & US Constitution	3
Tears of a Hymn	4
Ice Cream Social	5
Outreach News	6
July / August Birthdays	6
Notes & News	7
Reporters & Meetings	7
Devotions	8 / 9

“Sending a Clear Message”

by Pastor Proeber

All of us are familiar with the construction project on the upper part of our property. While it partially hides the church from view on Cathedral Oaks, it has not hampered us from doing what our Lord has called us to do as his witnesses.

As part of the bridge replacement project, Granite Construction is also charged with reinforcing the creek bank. To accomplish this erosion free barrier, the creek bed had to be dug out. The majority of the soil which was removed was replaced with limestone boulders of varying sizes. After these were dumped into place the bank was recovered with soil. At the end of the project the “mountain of stones” behind the church will be reinstalled to return the creek’s habitat to its original condition.

The interesting part of this reinforcement project was the delivery of the limestone. For the better part of two days delivery trucks were unloading their heavy cargo. Each time a load was dumped, the ground shook and the

pictures in my office rattled. After the first few loads, I became accustomed to the noise and vibration. I also accepted it as part of the project. What was curious was a discovery I made one morning as I took my customary walk. As each load of rocks sent a vibration to my office, they also had an effect on our sign along Cathedral Oaks. I noticed many of the letters and numbers which made up our sign were shaken off the board. The pieces that remained left only an unrecognizable gibberish. It read something like this: S_ND_Y ___SH_P _:0 _m. The others lines were just as jumbled. It was clearly apparent our sign no longer conveyed a clear message.

As I returned the letters and numbers to their rightful places a thought came to me. It was clear our sign did not send out a clear message. I also wondered about the message we send out into the community as members of Our Redeemer and witnesses of our Savior?

The question is valu-

able, and its answer is equally valuable. What kind of message are we sending into the community about our teaching and the importance of our faith?

The question of a clear message makes me recall an account which was shared with me. There was a couple looking for a church. Both the husband and the wife had prior church backgrounds, but they realized something was missing. One day the wife talked to her neighbor because she knew the family always went to church on Sundays. The neighbor’s response was blunt. “Oh, you wouldn’t want to come to my church. We’re against everything.” The strange twist of the story was guess who ran into each other the very next Sunday? You’re right, the neighbor who didn’t give a clear message about her church and the neighbor who was looking for a church. In spite of the less than stellar recommendation, the family stayed and became very dedicated members.

Continued on page 2

Message, from page 1

It is important that you and I send a clear message to the people with whom we come into contact. We can't get away from it, people are always watching and listening to us, and especially so, if they know we are members of a church. What we say and what we do cannot be disguised, nor should it be explained away. We also need to remember the Lord holds us accountable for both our words and our actions.

Stop and think about it for a moment. If someone asks you about Our Redeemer, are you excited to say, "I am a member there!" Or is the question followed by a mumble with a hint of chagrin? What if someone asks you about what we believe and teach? Do you seize the opportunity to "give the reason for the hope you have," or do you convey the attitude, you probably wouldn't like what we teach? In addition, there is the testimony of our actions. Maybe the simplest test is how we schedule our time. If everything else is more important than gathering with the saints, what message are we sending to those who are watching and listening? How will we lead a person to see the greatness of our God and the gift of his rescue in Jesus, if our actions make him easily replaced? Just think of the difference between saying, "Yes, I can make it after I worship the Lord," and "Yes, I can make it because it doesn't make any difference if I miss church." Without straining too much you and I can see the difference. Now, what does the Lord see?

It is imperative that you and I send a clear message both horizontally and vertically. What we say in our earthly relationships is just as important as what we say in our relationship with the Lord. It becomes even more important in these times of growing uncertainty and immorality.

Life is becoming more perplexing. What do I say? What do I do? Even if I try to avoid anything disagreeable or perceived as hurtful, I can easily be branded as bigoted, biased, uncaring and unloving—and that's just for starters. Certainly none of us goes out of our way to look for conflict, but it does have a habit of finding us. This is why we always need to send a clear message.

Finally, you and I need to understand it is not about us as individuals. Our primary responsibility is to stick with what God has recorded in his inspired and inerrant Word. Let those who cling to worldly opinions and deceptions rant, rage or seek revenge. Our confidence remains sure when we remain faithful to the Word of our God.

A prime example of this would be the prophet Ezekiel. In chapter 2 in the book which bears his name, the Lord calls him to the same task to which he calls us. It is to send a clear message. Ezekiel received it from the Lord, just as we have received ours from the Lord. Our sole concern is to speak what has been spoken to us. We are not to worry about people's reception or rejection. We are to be faithful to the Lord and his Word. Sure this is a daunting task in a world which rejects everything about the one true God, still, it should never keep us from doing what we are to do. We are in this time and this place to send a clear message to a world that needs clarity and truth.

As you read the call of Ezekiel, ask the Lord to feed you with his Word, as well as to fill your heart, soul and mouth with his Truth. Then ask the Lord to give you courage and faithfulness to send God's clear message out to a dark, deceived, and depraved world.

He said, "Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their fathers have been in revolt against me to this very day. The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says.' And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious house—they will know that a prophet has been among them. And you, son of man, do not be afraid of them or their words . . . You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen, for they are rebellious. But you, son of man, listen to what I say to you. Do not rebel like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you."
Ezekiel 2:3-8

State Supported Churches and the US Constitution

by Al Todd

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion" (First Amendment to the United States Constitution - the "Establishment clause").

"The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." (Tenth Amendment to the United States Constitution).

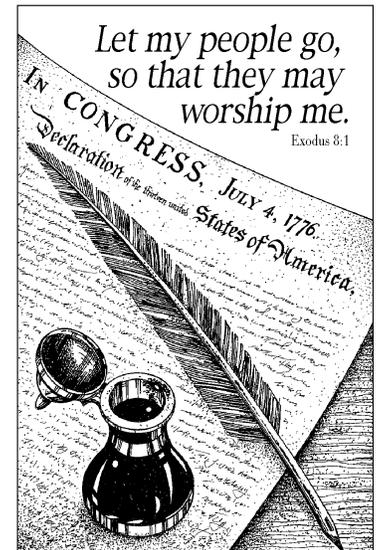
It is very clear that the writers of the Constitution intended to severely limit the power of the Federal government in order to protect the States and the people from the tyranny of an all powerful central government. States and local governments were to be the locus of power; not a far away, unaccountable Federal government.

For example, while the Federal government ("Congress") was prohibited from establishing a national religion, the States and localities were certainly free to do so - and did. After the Constitution was written, seven of the 13 States had government supported churches and two additional states (Delaware and Maryland) **required** legislators to profess their faith in Christianity. Taxes in those states were used to support churches. If you were a member of a "religious minority" (Confessional Lutherans, for example!!) you were allowed to direct that your taxes be used to support that church instead of the official State supported church.

Let's take Massachusetts as an example. That state allowed towns to make skipping church services a crime. As Mike Lee points out in his latest book *"Our Lost Constitution,"* for several decades after the Constitution was written, grand juries in Massachusetts issued more indictments for failing to attend church than for any other crime!

How far we have come. Most people, of course, do not want any government - community, city, county, state, or national - to dictate what we should or should not believe. True saving faith cannot be compelled. Some of the Founders may not have been believers, for example, but saw the Christian religion as a way to promote the morality and ethics which would make a free and orderly society possible.

The evidence is overwhelming that the Christian religion was, for the newly established United States, the bedrock upon which the nation was built. And further that it should be left to the people to decide what kinds of activities (a cross to honor a fallen hero, a nativity display, a Christmas tree) are authorized and not nine unelected members of the Supreme Court.



*The LORD foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.
But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart
through all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD.*

The Tears of a Hymn

by Barbara Grunewald

Why do certain Christian hymns move us to tears? Most often I think that the beautiful lyrics and music simply fill and overflow our hearts with the immeasurable love of God. But there are other things that strike a deeply personal chord and tug on our emotions. We frequently have our own memories connected to familiar hymns, reminding us of a loved one or a particularly moving situation in our lives. Sometimes the tears just start to fill our eyes and there's no stopping them.

One hymn comes immediately to my mind because our former teacher, sweet Susan Degner, taught it to the children of Our Redeemer Lutheran School. I know that there are several moms in our congregation who get teary-eyed every time we sing "Go, My Children With My Blessing." The children practiced it during the school year, but it was unforgettable when they sang the hymn at the conclusion of their kindergarten graduation. When we sing it now during our church service, we can still see those little faces at the front of the church loudly singing the words of this comforting hymn. It ends with the line of the Lord's promise for all, "Go, my children, I will keep you And give you peace."

We also remember the favorite hymns of our loved ones. I don't have many memories of my mom, but I do recall her singing "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty" to me and my sisters when we were so very young. Of course, we can recall the hymns sung at weddings, baptisms, funerals, and other special occasions. Speaking of weddings, I wondered about Greg's selection of "Be Still My Soul" for our ceremony. The melody sounded a bit like a dirge to me at first. After studying the words more closely, I realized that it was the perfect hymn to set the tone for our new life together. It is a song of trust – the trust we have in our good and gracious God. The lyrics are filled with the comfort He provides for us in this life and tells of our secure reward ahead. The last lines say, "Be still, my soul, when change and tears are past, All safe and blessed we shall meet at last." Despite the challenges and disappointments of today, we look forward to the peace and joy of our eternal life tomorrow with the Lord.

There are hundreds, perhaps thousands of hymns with words taken from the Bible that speak of the Lord's great love for us. Our Lutheran Hymnal categorizes them by theme, such as: Advent, Christmas, Easter, End Time, Word of God, Redeemer, Faith, Prayer, Trust, Church, and so on. Basically they encompass all that God has graciously gifted to us. It's no wonder that these poignant songs touch our hearts and stay with us throughout our lifetime. In fact, I am surprised that as my memory seems to fade a bit over time, the lyrics of many hymns stand by me like an old friend whispering words of comfort in my ears. I do know that the old friend is really my one and only true friend – Jesus Christ.

Lastly, the thought of that friend takes us to the deeply touching hymn, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." The story behind the lyrics is interesting, sad, yet uplifting. The song was born from a poem written by an Irish teacher named Joseph M. Scriven (1819-1896). The day before his wedding, his fiancée died in a tragic drowning accident. Following the tragedy, he left for Canada to begin a new life. There he fell in love and became engaged to the relative of one of his students. Sadly, his life was again shattered when the young lady took ill and died before their wedding date.

Joseph would never marry but immersed himself in his faith and became a Baptist minister. He wanted to spread the message of Jesus' love to everyone he met. During that time, he received the troubling news that his mother in Ireland was very ill. Since he was unable to travel to Ireland, he sent her a letter along with a consoling poem entitled "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." The words gave solace to his mother and to anyone who faces hardships, pain, suffering and sorrow. That source of comfort comes from our Savior through prayer. Joseph repeated the lines in his poem, "Take it to the Lord in prayer" so that we will remember to always pray. In fact, he urges us to pray six times in the three stanzas of the hymn.

Years later, a friend who was visiting Joseph discovered the beautiful poem. The friend was so impressed

Continued on page 5

Ice Cream Social

By Al Todd



On Friday, June 12th, at 7:00 pm there was an ice cream social in the Fellowship Hall organized by Debbie Aitkins. About 20 attended.

We were rewarded with several varieties of ice cream (Jim Everson brought a custom ice cream flavor using ingredients from Peru!) as well as toppings (fresh fruit, assorted nuts, chocolate bits, M&Ms, hot fudge, whipped cream, etc.) that only added to the enjoyment. Most went back for seconds (and some for thirds!) since it had been several years since we had our last ice cream social.

I think I can say with confidence that it won't be "years " before we have our next one!

Debbie created an "Ice Cream Trivia" quiz. There were 26 questions about ice cream facts you never cared about - until now (e.g., which WWII dictator banned the sale of ice cream throughout his country?). It was tough. While no one got a passing score of even 60% or better, Karolyn Hanna achieved a score of 42% which turned out to be the high score. She won the grand prize which was the same as the prize awarded to everyone who participated. Not only equal opportunity but equal outcomes, too. Thanks, Debbie.

Sonja Todd brought the "Wits and Wagers" board game. The game was new to everyone. We formed 6 groups of 3 each (yours truly was the game show host) to give it a try to win the "grand prize." The game tests your knowledge of arcane trivia.

For example, even though we have more than our fair share of intellectually gifted members, no one - not one group - over the seven (7) games that comprise a "Round" got the right answer to any of the questions. However, the game mainly tests how credible you think your answer to any game is when compared to the answers of the other players. After all the answers are displayed, each team "bets" on the answer they think is the best. The best answer is the one that is closest to the correct answer without exceeding it (sort of like "The Price is Right"). Often players do not bet on their own answers as they have more faith in the answers of other players. The team of Frank and Pat Florez and Carl Schueler won the first (and only) Round on the final game. Oh, and the grand prize? Bragging rights.

The Social ended about 8:45 pm. Hope we see you at the next one!

Tears of a Hymn, from page 4

that he urged Joseph to have his poetry published in a book entitled *Poetry and Other Verses*. Later, a famous musician, Charles C. Converse, composed the music for the lyrics that comprise the hymn we now dearly cherish. The words and their meaning are quite simple and uplifting for our souls. What a friend we really do have in Jesus!

The splendor of God's immense love is revealed in our Christian hymns and often we are moved to tears. Whether we cry tears of pain or of joy, we are embraced by the compassion of our Heavenly Father who carries us through the seasons of our lives. We are blessed beyond words.



“**A** farmer went out to sow his seed.”

Outreach Opportunities

The Outreach Committee continues to sponsor events to provide opportunities for members to invite friends and relatives to Our Redeemer. Some events are conducted outside the formal worship service. There are also special worship services with food and fellowship afterwards. We hope these events will encourage you to invite people you know to learn more about our church and to hear the message of Grace we proclaim. Please plan to participate, and to serve!

Upcoming Events include —

The Annual Beach, Bike and Barbeque is scheduled for August 30th at Goleta Beach. We will meet at our regularly reserved area—C around noon. Games will be provided and there will be fun for all. Please bring along your favorite chair, and either a dish to pass or dessert. Everything else will be provided. If you are biking, we will leave the church parking lot around 11:15 am. Friends are always welcome!

The Festival of Friendship and Worship under the Oaks is planned for September 20th. Please remember the time change to 10:30 am. Following the service we will have our traditional tri-tip barbeque. Remember to bring along salads, beans, bread and desserts. Most important, bring along a friend who needs to know Jesus.

Birthdays for July and August



We rejoice in the many blessings God has given the members of our family of faith. May the Lord continue to bless them richly.

July

-
- 4th - Alice G.
 - 7th - Emily P.
 - 8th - Elijah D.
 - 10th - Mark G.
 - 13th - Janessa S.
 - 18th - Sally K.
 - 20th - Barb F., Glen K.
 - 21st - Marieta E., Michael F.
 - 25th - Devon J.
 - 31st - Justin S., Susan T.

August

-
- 14th - Brittany G.
 - 23rd - Pat S.
 - 24th - Jane F.

Serve the Lord with Gladness

Reporters Wanted

Book review? Personal Story of Faith?
Event report? Potluck—gathering? Party? Field Trip?

Half-page to three pages
Reviewed for scriptural consistency
Due by 25th of month to appear in next issue

Email to Carl Schueler (cfs_home@hotmail.com)
or Pastor Proeber (pastor@orlcsb.net)

A simple and rewarding way to serve!

Thanks to Al Todd and Barbara Grunewald for their articles this month. There is always a standing invitation to provide material for the *Reporter*. Throughout the past volumes, articles authored by members have really made every issue more interesting. We pray that every member will provide an article for 2015. If you have an idea, and you are not sure whether to act on it, please don't hesitate to speak to Pastor Proeber or Carl Schueler for advice. Thanks!

Meetings for July-August

Church Council	Tuesday, July 7th & August 4th at 7:00 pm
Committees	Tuesday, July 7th & August 4th at 8:00 pm
Outreach Committee	Tuesday, August 11th at 7:00 pm

Congregational Meeting—July 12th following the worship service

If you have a question regarding a specific area of ministry, please contact a member of the appropriate Board. He will be happy to help.

Notes & News

It is clear from the calendars, the months of July and August are a bit quieter than the rest of the year, but this does not mean nothing is happening. Behind the scenes plans are being made for the Fall schedule—handbells, mixed voice choir, Sunday School, mid-week Bible Class, and other assorted programs and events. If you have any suggestions for a way to augment our ministry of God's Word to people, now is the time to share

your thoughts and ideas.

Please take the time to speak to one of the Committee chairmen—(Jacob Martin, Elders; Joel Degner, Education; and Jim Brown, Property / Trustees), or to Debbie Aitkins (handbells), or Pastor Proeber (choir, worship).

There is one program which remains ongoing through the summer, and that is Sunday morning Bible Study. We continue to hold it at 11:00 am every Sunday, unless otherwise noted.

Currently the study is on "Other Gospels." These are the books many speak about, but, finally, were never included in the canon of the Scriptures. It is an interesting and enlightening study. The study has three video segments remaining—Filling in the Blanks; Buried Treasures; and Taking a Closer Look.

There will be a brief break on August 16th and 23rd when Pastor Proeber will be gone.

Devotional Corner

"Consider the Source"

"Where did this man get these things?" they asked. "What's this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles! Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joses, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. *Mark 6:2-3*

"Where did this man get these things?" Those who heard Jesus were both amazed and perplexed. They were impressed by the wonderful way he taught and the miracles they witnessed. Still, they couldn't understand how Mary's son could do these things. Their lack of understanding became a stumbling block to their faith, and in the end, the people of Jesus' hometown rejected him.

It is a sad account, yet it is one to which I need to pay careful attention. Daily the devil seeks to confuse and deceive me. He wants me to see Jesus from my own understanding. While it is appealing, it is dangerous. If Jesus does not live up to my expectations, it leads me to the same conclusion the people of Jesus' hometown had. Instead of a source of help, he is a stumbling block. Instead of a source of truth, he is a fantasy. Instead of a source of relief, he is just another burden.

This is why I need to consider the source of Jesus' message, and the authority by which he offered it. Jesus is true God, and as God he is without error, he is always faithful, and what he says is the truth.

Through faith I can acknowledge Jesus is who he says he is. I can also trust his clear testimony revealed in the Bible. This is the source of truth upon which I can build my life. This is the source of comfort which offers peace for my sin-burdened heart. This is the source of confidence which tells my faith in him is never in vain. If this is not enough, I can also rely on his blood-signed guarantee. His innocent life given into death and his life-blood poured out from the cross to convince and comfort me.

This is what the people of Jesus' home town rejected when they took offence at Jesus. I can never afford to make the same mistake. I need the peace of forgiveness. I need the joy of heaven. I need the comfort of his never-failing truth. This is why I not only consider the wonderful message, I also consider the source of the message, and that is Jesus. He is my Savior, my Redeemer, and my solid foundation upon whom I build my hope.

Prayer Thoughts

O blessed Savior, thank you for giving me your Word which reveals you as my powerful and loving Savior. I also thank you for being the source of the truth which leads me through this life to eternal life.

Daily devotions can be accessed through www.whataboutjesus.com or www.wels.net. Please follow the instructions to view daily devotions and to subscribe to them. They are also available as "podcasts."

Devotional Corner

"The Simple Truth"

He [Jesus] went in and said to them, "Why all the commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." But they laughed at him. *Mark 5:39-40*

The world rejects the message of Jesus Christ. What is worse, it even ridicules what Jesus taught. When I see this reaction, why should I be surprised if I receive the same response. It is an important lesson to remember. It is especially important to remember as I live by faith and give a confident witness before all.

It is a challenge not to want to hide my faith, or to try to blend in with the world as much as possible. Maybe a don't ask, don't tell policy would get me through the difficult times. Maybe I should just follow the crowd and reject and ridicule the message of Jesus.

The simple truth is, I need to follow my Savior and confess him boldly regardless of the response of others. I need to understand that every day I am on this earth is one more day the Lord has given me to live to his glory and praise. It is also one more day to prepare myself to stand before him. On the last day, I alone will have to provide an explanation of my life. There is only one hope I have, and that is to confess Jesus for what the Scriptures reveal him to be. He is the Son of God sent to this earth. He is the Redeemer who paid the price to release me from the devil's bondage. He is the Savior who rescued me from death and the grave. This is the simple truth I need to believe and confess throughout my life.

Yes, it may prove to be a challenge to make this kind of confession. I may be subject to ridicule. I may be rejected by my family and friends. I may even be tempted to question if it is worth the effort and the sacrifice. Once again, I need to understand the simple truth. Just as Jairus saw the glory of Jesus as the Son of God in bringing his daughter back to life, so will I see the glory of Jesus in my resurrection on the last day. I will see him as he truly is, and I will receive the gift of eternal life in heaven.

Prayer

Jesus Christ my pride and glory, he the true and living light, strengthens me with glorious might.
Christ, revealed in sacred story, whom I now as Lord confess, teaches me true holiness.

Grant me, Lord, your Holy Spirit, that in all I follow him, lest the light of faith grow dim.
Let me ever trust your merit; let your blessing me attend; from all evil me defend.

Christian Worship 464 st. 1 & 3

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