



The Reporter

July & August 2017

The Reporter

Volume 15, Issue 06

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“A Clear Confession”

by Pastor Proeber

The Church has always faced, and will always face numerous challenges and attacks. It shouldn't be surprising. In the Bible we hear consistent warnings about such things. We can also refer to the accounts of historians throughout the ages.

Even though what we face is difficult and upsetting, it remains exactly what Solomon so wisely said, “there is nothing new under the sun.” This means the devil will use everything in his deadly arsenal to confuse, deceive, and distract believers. It also means you and I need to be prepared to combat both the open and subtle attacks to our faith. It finally means we have to be able to make a clear confession before all people.

The assault on Biblical truth is never-ending. Unfortunately, the devil has experienced too much success in his art of deception. We sadly watch people become more and more aggressive in denying God and his authority. We also see foundational teachings replaced with the mists of political cor-

rectness. As members of Christ's Church on earth, we have two options. One is to “cave in” to the pressure. Many formerly conservative churches have felt it is not worth the effort to take a firm stand. Others compromise God's truth for greater numbers. The results of both are the same. People are robbed of the confident hope God wants them to enjoy for time and eternity.

In contrast, there is the other option. This is to take a stand and make a clear confession. It is definitely unpopular. It is regularly castigated. It is even branded as being uncharitable, or worse. Let's fact it, to maintain a clear confession is a daily challenge. Still, it is the very thing our Lord wants us to do before the world.

One challenging area which used to be somewhat stable, and against which there were few arguments, is the definition of marriage. It used to be accepted that marriage was the rightful union of one man and one women. In the last several years this has changed dramati-

cally, and certainly not for the better. Today we live with a definition of marriage that says nothing, and probably means little in the long run. As long as people love each other and are willing to live their lives together, this is the new understanding of marriage. Erased is the need for God's original design of one man and one woman living together as husband and wife as God has commanded. This ultimately means there will be potential problems for our congregation, as well as for our pastor.

It might be said, we are trying to protect ourselves, but there is a completely different reason for creating a policy for “Christian Marriage.” We want to make a clear confession regarding God's design for marriage, as well as our complete acceptance of what that means.

Included with this article is our proposed policy. It is the product of searching the Scriptures, prayer, reviewing reliable

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Confession, from page 1

resources, and seeking good counsel from both our Synod and the Pacific Justice Institute. It is being presented to the congregation prior to the July Congregational meeting for review. Then, at that meeting, the motion will be presented to accept it and add it to our Constitution and By-Laws. So that we can have an informed discussion, it is being included with this article. There will also be a special Bible Class following the worship service on July 9th to familiarize ourselves with what it says and what it means.

Here is the text of that policy:

The Bible teaches that marriage was established and given by God at the time of creation. As he designed and instituted it, marriage is the lifelong union of one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6). It is a relationship that is to be honored and kept pure (Hebrews 13:4; Ephesians 5:22-33). As a man and woman promise lifelong faithfulness to each other as husband and wife, God himself joins them as one. Marriage is not simply a contract between two consenting individuals, nor is it merely a creation of human society, culture, or tradition. God himself instituted marriage at the time of creation, and God himself joins a man and a woman in marriage until he ends it through death.

The biblical teaching on marriage emphasizes the blessings God intends to convey to those joined together in the marital relationship. Through marriage God provides partners well suited and complementary to one another. In marriage, God provides a partner who will provide encouragement and support. Marriage is also to be the God-ordained means to procreate and to establish a stable environment in which children can be nurtured both physically and spiritually. Marriage is the one context God intended for the use of the blessing of sexual intimacy, where the sexual union of one man and one woman is an expression of love and oneness rather than a sinful satisfaction of lust. Finally, since we live in a fallen world, in marriage God provides a restraint for selfishness and sin as each partner strives to live the pure life that God intends for his people (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8).

For this reason the pastor of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church will only officiate at a wedding service when God's definition of marriage is accepted as true and confessed without exception or qualification. Furthermore, he will only officiate at a wedding where either one, or both the man and the woman are active members of Our Redeemer who freely and publically confess that all of the Bible is God's inspired and inerrant Word for all time, who live their lives in conformity with the Word of God, and who regularly participate in worship and receive the Lord's Supper for the purpose for which God instituted it (1 Corinthians 11:23-29). Finally, the buildings and property of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church will only be used by the members of Our Redeemer, and in a way which is in agreement with the Biblical and confessional statement of the congregation (Constitution, Article II).

In the case where one person is an active member of Our Redeemer, both the man and woman will willingly agree to attend a five week pre-marital class, and one post-marital class to better understand what the Lord's institution of marriage is, and what the Lord expects of a husband and wife according to his Word revealed in the Bible. The five week course will be completed prior to a wedding being authorized by the congregation, or officiated by the pastor - on site or off site.

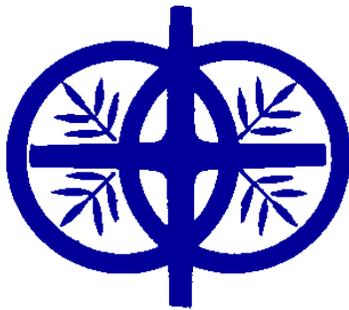
If neither the man nor the woman is an active member of Our Redeemer, they can attend a 26 week instructional course which leads to full membership in Our Redeemer Lutheran Church.

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Then, only after full confessional agreement regarding God's Word is attained and publically professed, will requests for marriage be entertained.

What is notable regarding our statement are the first two paragraphs. We make no excuses regarding what the Bible teaches, or what God ordains when he instituted marriage. We also make no excuses regarding what marriage provides. While this is in opposition to what most people believe, Jesus has nowhere said we are to capitulate to the norms and morals of society.



The third paragraph states what we are willing, and unwilling to do. It is not based on what we feel is good judgment or common sense. Nor does it simply imply sound legal advice. Our position is built on the foundation previously stated. It would be hypocritical for us to say we believe what God and the Bible say, then do what God expressly forbids. We want to make a clear confession before the world. In some instances it may actually mean saying, "No, we can't do this." Peter and John offered that same confession before the Sanhedrin. When they were commanded not to preach the good news about Jesus, their response said it all, "we must obey God rather than man."

The last two paragraphs are a practical application of what the Scripture says and what our confession maintains. We will perform marriages for members. We also clarify what that entails. It is not to make it harder to perform a Christian wedding, it just offers a clear confession. We take God's Word seriously and we want people to do the same. Our purpose is not to be recognized as the local "wedding chapel." We are to be a place where a man and woman can seek God's blessing on their life together as husband and wife. This is what God designed and desired in the first place.

I'm certain there will be many questions, especially in the area of practical applications. There might even be some questions why something like this is even necessary. The challenge before us is that we live in an ever-changing society which seems to pride itself on moving farther from the Lord and his Word. Our purpose is, and always has been, to be a clarion of pure teaching. This is why we have taken time to create this policy. It is also why we want to take time to study and assimilate it. We want to make a clear confession before all people, and the world.

**Bible Class, Sunday July 9th following the worship service
Congregational Meeting, Sunday July 16th
following the worship service**

²¹Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. ²²Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—³⁰for we are members of his body. ³¹"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." *Ephesians 4:21-31*

June Progressive Dinner

by Al Todd



On Saturday, June 17th, the members of Our Redeemer scheduled and hosted a progressive dinner. Such an undertaking needs three people to volunteer their homes to host the three separate events that make up the complete event: one to host the hors d'oeuvres; another to host the main meal; and a third to host the dessert.

For the first event, Karolyn Hanna hosted the hors d'oeuvres from 5:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. It was a picture perfect Santa Barbara late afternoon, and most people sat around the patio for some fellowship, food, and beverages.

From Karolyn's home everyone drove up the hill to the Schueler home. There Pam hosted the main meal from 6:15 P.M. to 7:30 P.M. which featured chicken piccata, a vegetable dish, pasta, wine, and the usual attractive table settings.

After an enjoyable meal, everyone drove down the hill to the Todd home. There Sonja hosted the last stage—dessert—from 7:30 P.M. to about 10:00 P.M. It was a pleasant evening as most members circled the dessert buffet laid out in the kitchen, then headed outside to enjoy the food and conversation.

Fifteen (15) people attended the evening's event. Several members who did not serve as hosts, nevertheless helped out by bringing food and/or helping to set up and clean up after the events were over. Others just showed up and joined in.

These events are great opportunities to get better acquainted with church members whom you may only see at church on Sundays. It is also a place where non-members, who may be a little hesitant to come to church because they don't know anyone, can get to know congregation members on a more personal level.

I hope to see you at our next event which is a July 4th movie, meal, and fireworks.

4th of July—Film, Food, and Fireworks

On Tuesday, July 4th, we will have our traditional celebration of Independence Day. The afternoon begins with a 4:00 pm showing of the movie, "Mark Twain's America" in the sanctuary. It is an interesting documentary about the man we know both as Mark Twain and Samuel Clemens. He was an author, a river boat captain, a "peopleologist," as well a husband and father who endured great tragedies.

Around 5:15 pm we will move to the fellowship hall to enjoy a tri-tip barbeque with salads, beans and other delightful recipes. After some clean up, the evening will continue just around the corner from Debbie's home. There we will watch the fireworks at Girsch Park. The show will begin around 8:30—9:00 pm, but plan on getting to the corner a little early. Seating fills up quickly.

Following the pyrotechnic display, we will return to Debbie's home for desserts, snacks and fellowship. Make sure you don't miss out on this enjoyable evening. Hope to see you there!



Ice Cream Social

In what has become a enjoyable Friday activity, we will have our annual Ice Cream Social and Game night. The highlight of the evening is a bountiful array of flavors and toppings just begging to be sampled. After a few cookies, bars, water and coffee, the entertainment will begin—bring out the games!

As a general practice we try to have one game that everyone can enjoy at the same time. There are a few currently being considered. Regardless of the game, it is accompanied by laughter and just a good time since there are no “winners or losers.”

For the real ice cream “die hards,” there will be one additional opportunity to get an extra scoop or two before everything is cleaned up for the night.

Ice Cream Social
Friday, July 28th at 7:00 pm



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—Jonathan Y.

Give Thanks!

Through the month of June, two of our families were blessed with the gift of healthy baby boys. On June 10th, Jaden Schueler, was born to Marrisssa and Josh Schueler. On June 29th, Landon Schroeder was born to Emmalee and Justin Schroeder. We rejoice in the Lord’s rich blessing to these families, and we ask the Lord to keep them in his gracious care.

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 for his article 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 2017. 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 11 th & August 8 th at 7:00 pm
Committees	Tuesday, July 11 th & August 8 th at 8:00 pm
Outreach Committee	Tuesday, July 18 th at 7:00 pm
Board of Education	Tuesday, July 25 th at 7:00 pm

Congregational Meeting—July 16th 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

July and August are usually quiet months, but there are a few activities to keep in mind. On August 20th, we will have our Beach, Bike and Barbeque at Goleta Beach, Area # 3. There will be good food, games, desserts, and day filled with sunshine and fresh air. Watch the worship folder for more information, or ask one of the Outreach Committee members.

Throughout July and August, Sunday Worship and Bible Class will continue. The Lord's Supper will also be offered on the first Sunday of the month. For the morning Bible Class there will be two topics covered. The first will be our position as members of two kingdoms—the eternal kingdom of our Savior and the earthly kingdom in which we now live. The second will review the marriage policy printed on page two. There will also be a Quarterly Congregational meeting on July 16th following the worship service. Once again, plan to be present!

In **September** our regular schedule of events will restart. There will be mid-week Bible Classes, hand-bell and mixed voice choir practices, Sunday School, and other activities. Keep an eye open for opportunities to serve and grow in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Devotional Corner

My Greatest Fear

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”
Matthew 10:28

Franklin Roosevelt said during his first inaugural address, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” The words inspired the American people during the darkest hours of the Depression. But what about today? Is our greatest fear simply fear?

It is hard to tell a person not to be afraid. There may be real, deep seated, and identifiable reasons to be afraid. So what is the solution?

Jesus puts fear into the proper perspective. His words are to the point, “Don’t be afraid of those who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul.” Enemies of the faith, false teachers, persecutors, agents of the devil, none of these should cause me fear. They may threaten. They may be relentless and furious in their attacks. Still they cannot rob me of my soul. Through the working of the Holy Spirit and my Savior, I remain the Lord’s. I am his, and his promise is that nothing will ever separate me from his love. Since I belong to Jesus, I do not have to fear those who can take my life.

My greatest fear should be that I might offend my God and Lord. He is the “one who can destroy both the body and the soul in hell.” I need to be on my guard. While my enemies cannot tear me from his hands, I can leave. My actions and my choices may lead me away from him. As Scripture reminds me, “I must go about my salvation with fear and trembling.” God will never fail, but I might.

This is why I need to hold tightly to my Savior. In Jesus, I find courage. In Jesus, I find strength. In Jesus, I find faithfulness. Even more important, in Jesus I find forgiveness and peace. It is only through Jesus I can overcome all my fears, and even my greatest fear.

Prayer

O blessed Lord, keep me safe through your holy Word. When I am afraid, remove that fear with your power and your presence. Then, strengthen me to live to your praise and glory.

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.”