



The Reporter

May 2015

The Reporter

Volume 13, Issue 05

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“Why the Resurrection Matters”

by Pastor Proeber

Over the past several Sundays, one of the lessons for the day has come from the “Acts of the Apostles.” Although the five readings are only a small portion of the larger context, they do offer some effective and powerful lessons. Three could quickly come to mind. What makes them particularly interesting is that all were effected by the Lord on people, namely the apostles and the members of his Church.

The first of the lessons is the change which was worked in the hearts and minds of Jesus’ disciples. We remember on Easter Sunday evening, the Eleven were locked in a room for fear of the Jews. Even after Jesus appeared to them and gave them proof he was alive, they remained unsure of what the future had in store. This uncertainty was removed by the advent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Following Jesus’ promise of comfort and encouragement, the apostles were changed. No longer were they enslaved by their fears. Openly and with great confidence they

walked throughout Jerusalem proclaiming the good news about Jesus.

This leads to the second observation. When we read the first few chapters of the Book of Acts, we see the boldness with which the apostles conducted themselves. This boldness was especially apparent when Peter and John were arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin. In the face of political pressure and the threat of punishment, they didn’t back down. They clearly stated they must proclaim the good news about Jesus, and obey God rather than men. This boldness became even more apparent as persecution replaced the threats and many powers sought to silence the Gospel. Gone were their fears. Gone were their doubts. Gone were their inhibitions. They were fearless proclaiming the truth about Jesus before all people.

This leads to the third observation. Because of the bold and effective efforts of the apostles, the Church grew and spread. People rejoiced in the faith they had received,

and put that faith into action regardless of where they went, and regardless of the reason why they left their homes in Galilee and Judea.

When we observe even these three experiences in the life of the early church, we may wonder how did these things come to take place? The answer is not difficult. As a matter of fact, it is one of the most important and clearly recognizable truths of Christianity. Everything which happened in the early church came as a result of the resurrection. Everything changed with the angels message on Easter Sunday morning, “He is not here! He is risen!” As you and I consider this message, and what came as the result of it, we arrive at an obvious and important conclusion: The resurrection matters.

Our first impression might be, “tell me something I don’t know.” We know the resurrection is our guarantee of eternal life in heaven. We also know it is the reason why we can approach our Lord in prayer. Still, if this is on-

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Resurrection, from page 1

ly what we see the resurrection offering us, we have lost sight of much of what the resurrection means. Certainly Jesus rose from the dead to shatter the devil's control and the fearful threats of the death and the grave, but Jesus' resurrection offers so much more. This is why the Acts of the Apostles is so important.

If you and I need anything for our lives of love and service, it is encouragement. We need to not only recognize the endless opportunities the Lord sets before us, we also need to see the endless encouragement he provides. As people who put their faith in a living and victorious Savior, we have been changed. First and foremost, we see the same change the Lord brought about in the disciples. No longer are we trembling and bewildered. No longer are we trapped in doubt and confusion. Jesus lives, and as a result we are transformed. Every enemy, including fear and doubt is overcome. We can come out of our locked rooms. We can walk freely throughout this world. We can do all things, because the resurrection matters. The same can be said about our boldness to proclaim the Gospel.

Unfortunately, the world still exercises too much control over us. We take its warnings seriously and never talk about religion. We want to keep our close friends close. We don't want to call attention to ourselves. We don't want to be branded as some kind of religious "nut." But, if our goal is to "fly under the radar screen" regarding our faith, then we are actually saying, "Jesus rose for nothing, and the resurrection is meaningless." Nothing could be farther from the truth. The resurrection matters. Because it matters to me I want to live with the boldness and confidence it provides. I also want to let as many people as possible know how the resurrection changed me.

The change was certainly dramatic, and it is one in which I find great joy. I was dead, but now I am alive. I was caught in darkness, but now I walk in the light of life. I was only hostile to God, but now I am a child of God and heir of heaven. The resurrection matters, and I want to proclaim it to those who need to know it, because it matters to them as well.

This finally leads to the third observation. It was because of the resurrection the church grew and spread. I am not advocating that the message of the resurrection is a secret formula or "silver bullet" to make our congregation grow larger, or to start new congregations throughout the Central Coast. This kind of growth should be left to the Holy Spirit who promises to carry out this blessed work. Where I do see the importance of the resurrection is that the message of the resurrection is something I can carry around with me, and in me regardless of where I go or where I could possibly be driven—think persecution.

The powerful truth that Jesus was raised from the dead matters, especially in the way I live my life. From Scriptures I am reminded, "I always carry around in me the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ." I cannot escape or ignore the significance and blessing my Savior has secured for me. So why try to avoid or hide it! The resurrection matters to me as I live my life to the glory and praise of my Savior and God. Not only does the resurrection empower and motivate me, it also guides me in the way I do live.

It is clear we do not live as the rest of the people of the world do. We are not fearful, anxious, or filled with doubt. We know Jesus died and rose again, so we also know he will be with us. He will direct us along a safe and secure path. In the end he will give us eternal life. This makes a marked change on how we live our lives and what we do with the opportunities our Lord sets before us.

I always enjoy reading the Acts of the Apostles. It is unique in its scope and story. There is adventure. There is mystery and intrigue. There is excitement and enthusiasm. Jesus had unlocked the potential of his church when he said go into the world. The Lord's people went and found joy in serving their Lord.

I would like to encourage each of you to read, or reread the Acts of the Apostles. It will give you a different perspective on your faith and your life in the Lord. It will also serve as a reminder that ours is a resurrection faith. It is one of joy, of victory, of boldness, and of unshakable confidence. Nothing rivals its powerful message. This is why the resurrection matters, and why it matters to each of us.



“In Christ Alone”

by Barbara Grunewald

The *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal* is a collection of Christian hymns written throughout the centuries that praises God and celebrates the life of our Savior. These beautiful songs enrich our church services, while strengthening our relationship with the Lord through words and melodies. Even many non-believers can recognize the lyrics of such moving hymns as “Amazing Grace” and “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.” The words of these songs summarize our belief in Jesus within the succinct format of a hymn. What a glorious way to worship the Lord through such timeless songs of praise.

Thankfully our synod has embraced certain contemporary hymns as well. One such modern hymn writer is a Northern Irish composer by the name of Keith Getty. He and Stuart Townend have co-written several moving pieces that you may recognize from our own church services. The three that come to mind are: “Speak O Lord,” “In Christ Alone,” and my personal favorite, “The Power of the Cross.” Like the traditional hymns from long ago, these pieces fill our hearts with the love Christ shows for us sinners.

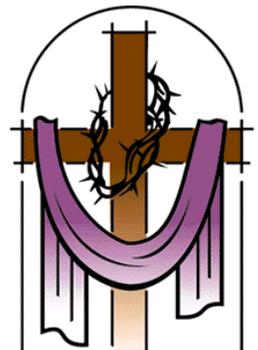
In the summer of 2013, “In Christ Alone” made headlines when a hymnal committee of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. requested permission from Keith Getty and Stuart Townend to alter the words of the song for their hymnal. The original stanza reads:

**In Christ alone, Who took on flesh,
fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
scorned by the ones He came to save.
‘Til on that cross as Jesus died,
the wrath of God was satisfied;
For ev’ry sin on Him was laid –
Here in the death of Christ I live.**

The Presbyterian Church committee proposed to alter the lines to: **“‘Til on that cross as Jesus died, the love of God was magnified.”** The two songwriters rejected the changes to their lyrics and the committee then voted to bar the hymn. The committee chair stated the “view that the cross is primarily about God’s need to assuage God’s anger” would present a negative effect on the hymnal’s purpose to promote the faith of future generations. Apparently this was the second time a church committee had attempted to alter the same lyric by removing the “wrath of God.”

Keith Getty was interviewed about the proposed changes to the song several months later. He said that “we believe altering the lyrics would remove an essential part of the gospel story as explained throughout Scripture. The main thread of what we see revealed throughout the Old and New Testament is the need for man to be made right with God. The provided path toward reconciliation came through Christ’s predetermined and perfect sacrifice on the cross, satisfying God’s wrath once and for all. The two hymnal committees wanted to change the lyrics to focus on how Christ’s death on the cross magnifies God’s love for the world. And indeed, God’s love was magnified on Calvary’s hill. Yet the way this occurred was through Christ doing for us what we could not do for ourselves – shedding his own perfect blood to atone for our sins.”

The writers of “In Christ Alone” hope that the song’s message encompasses the attributes of God – His unsurpassed love, grace, sovereign power, justice and yes, wrath that are complexly united. Many believers don’t want to dwell on man’s sinful nature. Yet how can it be ignored when Scripture tells the story of original sin and God’s wrath – and God’s immeasurable love? Our own desperate need for atonement stems from the fact that we are sinners from the beginning of time, and our one and only hope is found “In Christ Alone.”



2015 Christian Leadership Conference

by Al Todd

2015 CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE
GROW LEAD IMPACT
 LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE BEFORE OTHERS, SO THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS AND GIVE GLORY TO YOUR FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN.
 MATTHEW 5:16

In the January 2015 Newsletter, I presented some background information concerning the 2015 Christian Leadership Experience. This is the third of four additional articles on the sessions.

Do Metrics Belong in Church?

This presentation was by Pastor Elton Stroh (WELS) and discussed the use of metrics, and some of the tensions that exist between those who believe metrics are useful and others who believe metrics don't belong in church. Pastor Stroh began with a well known quote by Einstein: "Not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts."

What is at the root of the tensions? Probably a lack of clarity in understanding that the Lord assigns both to himself and to us a role in "making disciples." We're confused if we think:

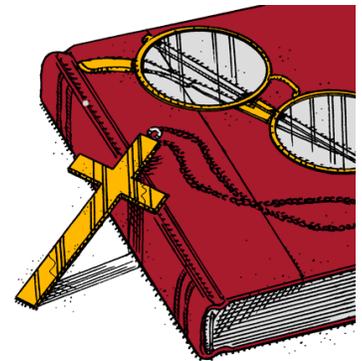
- We can do His job of converting the lost and transforming their lives.
- Our faithful efforts don't matter or that our thoughtfully selected metrics won't help us become better stewards of our God-given resources.

Pastor Stroh emphasized that there are basically two extremes to avoid. Thinking that visible church health depends 1) ONLY on God's activity through the Means of Grace; or 2) ONLY on our efforts (methods, programs, styles, metrics). Our Lord is fully capable of sustaining or turning his churches around – always through the power of his Word but, in addition, also through whatever human factors he decides to deploy.

Under the heading of "God's numbers and "our" numbers," Pastor Stroh opined that it's okay to set goals and count both, as long as we remember which category each number goes into and that our Lord is working in us and through us to accomplish what he desires. Some examples include:

- Youth and adult baptisms = God's numbers
- Personal contacts with prospects = "our" numbers
- Confessions of faith from within the community = God's numbers
- Multiple touches via community service projects = "our" numbers

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Let us keep our eyes
 on Jesus, the author and
 perfecter of our faith.

Hebrews 12:2

Leadership, cont' from page 4

The presentation ended with a list of what "good" metrics can do:

- Encourage everyone's best efforts.
- Clarify intended results and provide useful insights.
- Measure what you value and want to manage well.
- Spark stimulating, and often much needed, discussions.
- Keep focused on accomplishing your agreed-to goals.
- Reveal issues and adjustments that need to be addressed.
- Help you decide which efforts to enhance or suspend.
- Cause you to notice, count, and celebrate visible blessings

This was a very thought provoking presentation and one that will be discussed by many WELS congregations in the future. Next month's last article will describe the session on "Utilizing Community Resources for Outreach."

Property Update

by the Board of Trustees

The congregation is blessed with a capable and hard-working group of Trustees. These men take the initiative to keep the property and buildings in good repair, as well as making regular improvements. The last large project completed was the reworking of the playground equipment. This included demolition, installation of concrete, and the erection of new equipment.

It has been a well received improvement by both our members and some families with small children from the neighborhood. It also provides our pastor with an opportunity to speak to these families and share information about our congregation.

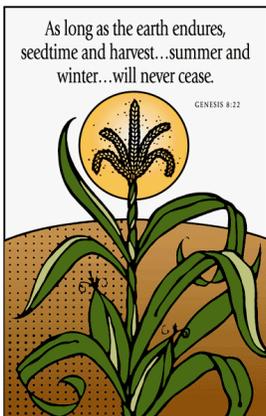
Just before Easter, the Trustees also installed a new bench by the playground equipment. It was a donation by the family of Eileen Shamel who was called into eternity last year. The bench allows people to sit back and relax while their children burn off excess energy. It also provides a nice view of the front of the church, the fellowship hall and the planting areas.

Most recently the "visitor parking signs" have been reinstalled, and some additional grading was done.

Over the course of the spring and summer, the Trustees will undertake one larger project along with several smaller ones. First on the agenda will be replacing the parking lot lights. The new poles are here along with the fixtures. So, it is a matter of just scheduling the work.

The Trustees would like to encourage all our members to serve in some capacity. There is always weeding, gardening, or small jobs which need to be done. Even an hour or two can make a difference. If you have any questions, please speak to the chairman, Jim Brown, or one of the other members—Frank Florez or Al Todd. They will be able to explain what needs to be done, or let you know when the next "work day" is scheduled.





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!

The next Outreach Committee meeting will be **Tuesday, May 26th at 7:00 pm**. All are welcome and encouraged to come and bring ideas!

In the coming weeks we will have a number of special opportunities through which we can invite others to come to know their Savior Jesus Christ and what he has done for them. Make sure you take the opportunity to “share the good news!”

- The Ascension of our Savior will be observed on May 17th during the 9:30 am worship service.
- Pentecost will be Sunday, May 24th with the Lord’s Supper.
- Trinity Sunday will be Sunday, May 31st.
- An Ice Cream Social is being planned for sometime in May or June. Details are still coming together.
- Independence Day celebration with a movie, barbeque and fireworks will be Saturday, July 4th at 4:00 pm.
- Beach, Bike and Barbeque will be August 30th at Goleta Beach. We will meet at Noon at our usual location—Picnic Area C.
- Festival of Friendship will be held in September. Following the outreach planning meet on May 26th, there will be more details regarding the date and what we can do to serve our Lord.

Members in Our Prayers

Through the last two months we have seen the Lord’s rich blessing in the members of our congregation. We rejoice with them, and we ask the Lord to continue to bless them as they grow in their love and faith in the Lord.

- Bill W. continues to improve after some set backs related to his chemotherapy.
- Emmallee S. was received into communicant membership at the end of her adult instruction class. Justin also reconfirmed his faith on April 19th.
- Lucas Henry, Emmallee and Justin’s infant son was received into the kingdom of God through the gift of Baptism on the same day.
- Marrissa H. and Josh S. were joined together in marriage on May 9th during an afternoon service.
- Katie S. and Tom B. continue with their pre-marital counseling in advance of their June 15th wedding.

To God be the Glory!

Notes & News

† Choir Update

Both the choirs are coming to the end of their practice and performance times. After several months of dedicated service and hard work, they will take a break until August. We thank the Lord for their service throughout the “festival portion” portion of the Church Year. The music they provided added to the beauty of our worship.

As always, there is an open invitation for people to ring and sing. Neither requires specific skills, just a willingness to serve the Lord and a commitment to make practices.

If you are interested in either of the choirs for the Fall, please speak with Debbie regarding the bell choir, or Pastor Proeber for the mixed voice choir.

† Bible Class

Our Sunday morning and Wednesday evening classes continue to meet. Both classes are coming to the end of their current topics, and new ones will begin in June.

Currently the Sunday morning class is studying “Noah—the Man, the Ark, and the Aftermath.” It has been an interesting presentation with good discussion. It is still not too late to join in the last two lessons. Remember, Bible Class is at 11:00 am on Sunday mornings, following worship and refreshments.

The Wednesday evening class is approaching completion of the study: “The Seven Commandments Christians are to Break as Often as Possible.” The study, based on the book by Jonathan Fisk has offered some interesting perspectives and lively discussions.

The last section takes a look at the rule that “you can find God in the worship of yourself.”

† Sunday School

Christian Education for our children will continue through the months of May and June. July and August are still being evaluated because of vacation schedules. Remember, Sunday School is scheduled for the first and third Sundays of the month. Classes meet during the hymn of the day and the sermon. Please speak to one of the teachers for more information: Barbara F., Sonja T., or Sue P.

Quarterly Congregational Meeting—April 2015

by Carl Schueler

The first quarterly Congregational meeting was held Sunday, April 12th, following the worship service with all nine Council members present. The meeting was also attended by one additional voter and three women members. The meeting was called to order by the chairman, Erle P., at 11:00 am. Pastor Proeber opened with a prayer. The minutes of the January meeting were read and approved.

There was no unfinished business from the January meeting.

Committee reports included Elders, Education, Trustees (property and grounds), Financial Secretary, Treasurer and Endowment Fund. The Pastor also presented his report. New business included the confirmation of Carl S. to serve on the Board of Education and as Recording Secretary for the Council and the Congregation.

The Trustees specifically noted that:

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Minutes, continued from page 7

- 4 lights and poles were received to replace existing parking lot lights;
- A very profitable work day was completed on March 28th
- Future tasks are being planned as time and finances enable them to be completed, e.g., parking lot re-seal, paint parsonage, replace parsonage patio door and windows

The Financial Secretary reported:

General Fund Offerings for March 2015	\$ 36,371
Total Offerings for the First Quarter	\$ 42,759

The Treasurer reported:

Beginning Balance January 1, 2015	\$ 31,457
Offerings	\$ 39,326
Expenses	\$ 36,444
Ending Balance March 31, 2015	\$ 34,339

The Treasurer also reported the status of the ORLC Endowment fund:

Beginning Balance January 1, 2015	\$120,368
Change in Value	\$ 4,398
Fund Value March 31, 2015	\$124,767

The Pastor reported:

- Worship, Lord's Supper, and Bible Class attendance showed another improvement.
- Marrison H. was received into communicant membership
- Emmalee S. will be confirmed on April 19th and Lucas will be baptized
- The elders, through Jacob M. and Sonja T., are beginning to utilize "social media" to advertise events within the congregation. This combined with other forms of communication may prove helpful to get the good news of our Savior more effectively into the community
- The Update on ministry shows we have a fairly comprehensive ministry, and many opportunities for people to grow in their faith, love and service.

Announcements:

The next outreach meeting will be held Tuesday, May 26, 2015, at 7:00 pm

The next Voter's meeting will be held Sunday, July 12, 2015, following the worship service

The meeting adjourned with the singing of the "doxology at 11:40 am.

Forward in Christ Subscription

For the 2014 budget year we had asked those interested to indicate their desire to receive the "Forward in Christ," and to pay for the "congregational subscription charge." Many took advantage of this arrangement last year. In July the subscription will come due, and the council has decided to follow the same course of action for 2015/6.

In the next few weeks, the subscription sheet will again be placed out. Please indicate your interest to receive the Forward in Christ. Then, submit the cost of your subscription to the church (*Note that it is for the Forward in Christ*). The cost for the year will be \$12.00 which includes delivery to your home. If you have any questions, please speak to Al T.. Thank You!

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

Hard-copy to Carl Schueler, or 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, Barbara Grunewald, and Carl Schueler for their articles this month.

There is 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 May

Church Council	Tuesday May 5 th at 7:00 pm
Committees	Tuesday May 5 th at 8:00 pm
Outreach Committee	Tuesday May 26 th at 7:00 pm

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

Committee Chairmen are —

<i>Jacob Martin</i>	<i>Board of Elders</i>
<i>Joel Degner</i>	<i>Board of Education</i>
<i>Jim Brown</i>	<i>Board of Trustees</i>



May Birthdays

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

9th - Caroline R.
21st - Kelsey H.
23rd - Wilma H.
27th - Wyatt D.
Joshua S.
29th - Dale K.

Devotional Corner

"He Chose Me"

You did not choose me, but I chose you to go and bear fruit - fruit that will last.
John 15:16

Why would the Lord choose me? Why would he want me to go and be his representative in this world? Why would he want me to produce good works to the glory of his name? Why indeed!

Some may answer these questions with the assumption God wanted me because he liked what he saw in me. Others may answer differently. God wanted me because I wanted him first. Neither of these answers get to the truth.

So, why did the Lord choose me? Why does God choose anyone? The answer is explained by Paul. "When the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy" (Titus 3:4-5). It was God's undeserved love which sent Jesus into this world. It was the same love which brought Jesus to the cross and his sacrificial death. It was finally his love which moved him to choose me even when I should have been rejected.

As I view my Savior's undeserved love in choosing me, I can only love, thank, praise and serve him. I want to go and tell others of the great love I have experienced firsthand. I want to bear the fruit of good works to the glory and praise of his wonderful and gracious name.

There is no other response which Jesus desires, deserves, or which I can give to him who loved me first. How blessed I am to know that when it was impossible for me to choose Jesus, he chose me.

Prayer

O dearest Jesus, in your undeserved love you called me to be your own. You also cleansed me from my sin and changed my rebellious ways. Fill me with love and thanks to go and bear fruit to the praise of your name. Amen

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."