

The Reporter

September 2022

The Reporter

Volume 20, Issue 05

“Mounting a Sure Defense”

by Pastor Proeber

In his First Epistle to the Christian Church, Peter issues a sober warning. He writes: “Have sound judgment. Be alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). It is an ominous picture. It should cause us to be on our guard continually, and never think the good fight of faith is complete. The sad reality is, the world has influenced our flesh not to take this warning seriously. We begin to convince ourselves we have nothing to worry about. Besides, we are strong enough and should be able to resist the open attacks of the devil. Here is where we have to acknowledge we have a problem. The moment we do not take the devil’s machinations seriously, this is when he takes control of the battle. He delights when we believe we are alright just the way we are.

While we might want to debate this point, the bottom line is, by ourselves we cannot mount a sure and certain defense. By ourselves we grow weary. We lack the strength and perseverance needed for daily combat. We even find ourselves thinking giving up is an option. The battle is far too long and hard. We may also just lose interest.

This inability to mount a sure defense became apparent during COVID. At the same time, now in its waning days, we see just as many challenges. Worse yet, we are tired. We are frustrated. We long for some semblance of normalcy. Yet, none of these can be found.

The stand we took throughout masking, personal distancing, and confining ourselves to our homes has taken its toll. Things which brought us joy no longer offer the same joy. At the same time, joys are tentative waiting for what’s next. Sadly as a result, there are people who have lost the desire to battle the devil and their flesh, and have withdrawn from worship.

One could debate some of the reasons offered for not worshipping the way one used to before COVID. The real reason is found in the heart. When we examine our hearts, what do we see? Is there a joy as expressed by the psalmist who said, “I was glad when they said to me, let us go into the house of the Lord?” Is there an insatiable appetite to receive the body and blood of our Savior for the forgiveness of our sins and the grace to serve him with a God-pleasing life? Is there a joyful commitment to support the Gospel ministry of Our Redeemer with regular, generous, and first fruit offerings? Or, is there something a little less going on in the heart?

I have had several conversations with people encouraging them to become more active again. The response is usually, “Yes, but.” This answer does not provide any

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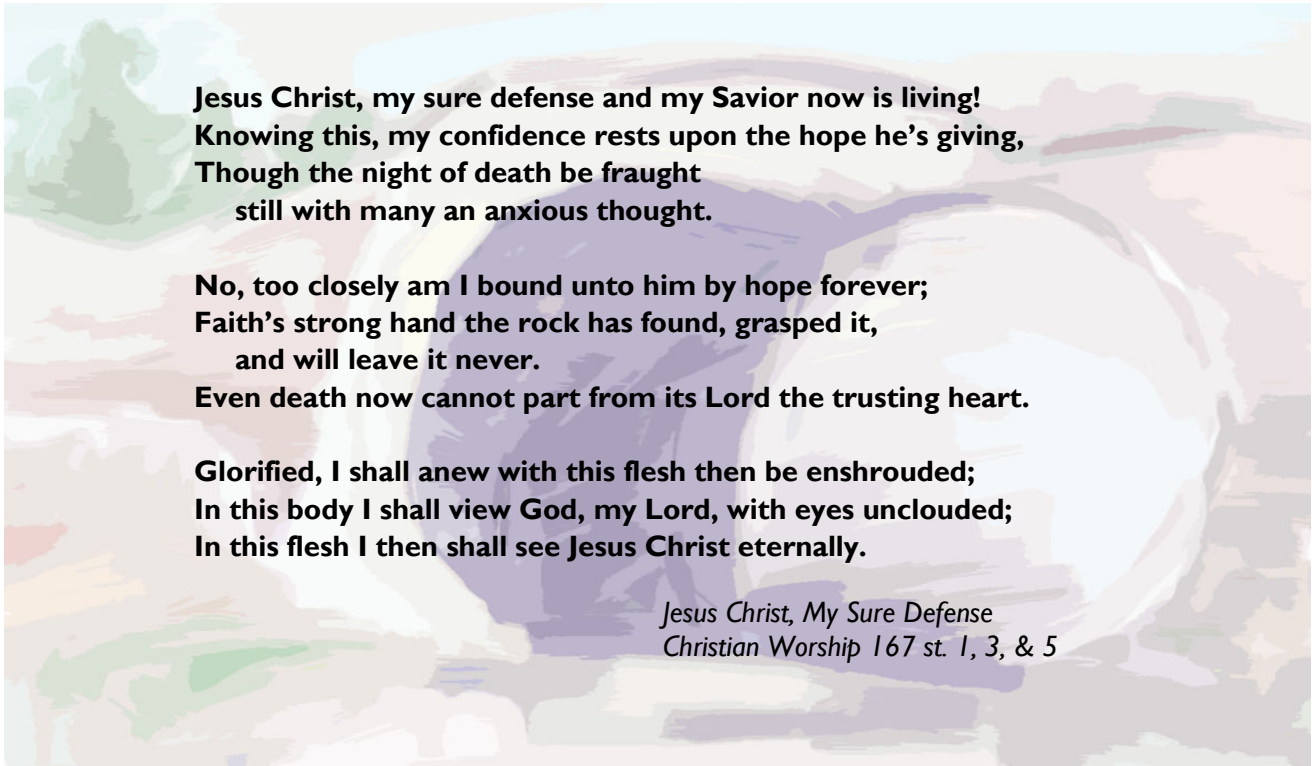
Sure Defense, from page 2

real defense against the devil. If anything, it puts one in greater danger of his wiles and deadly ways.

The only sure defense we can mount is the one our Savior already accomplished. In his Word he reassures us the battle is won and the devil is defeated. The only way to have this confidence is through the means the Lord has provided. It includes the daily study of his Word. It further includes the regular reception of the Lord's Supper. It even includes weekly "in person worship." Live streaming can be a good, temporary substitute, but it cannot equal or replace gathering with the saints for the mutual encouragement we desperately need. It might be assumed watching the live stream is comparable. It isn't. While I was blessed to be able to watch the live stream for a period of time, what I missed the most was the fellowship of the saints—saints gathering together to praise the Lord. It's possible we may not truly appreciate the encouragement and example of others as much as we should.

Also, let's be realistic, which provides the more certain defense—going into battle alone, or going into battle with the support of others who are facing the same struggles? The answer is obvious.

So, what do we need to learn and put into practice? We cannot fight spiritual battles alone. We will fail. We do not have the strength or determination to put on the full armor of God and battle our enemies daily. In time we will give up when the battle grows long and hard. Consequently, to mount a sure defense, we need what our Savior offers—his life, his strength, his reassurance, and his love. These prepare us to fight and win. We also need his forgiveness, his resurrection, and his righteousness. These proclaim the victory is already won, and we are more than conquerors. We also need faith. Faith to follow, faith to trust, and faith to be completely confident. Without a faith firmly built on our Lord and his Word, we will never mount a sure, or certain defense. It is also what makes the words of the hymnist so precious —



**Jesus Christ, my sure defense and my Savior now is living!
Knowing this, my confidence rests upon the hope he's giving,
Though the night of death be fraught
still with many an anxious thought.**

**No, too closely am I bound unto him by hope forever;
Faith's strong hand the rock has found, grasped it,
and will leave it never.
Even death now cannot part from its Lord the trusting heart.**

**Glorified, I shall anew with this flesh then be enshrouded;
In this body I shall view God, my Lord, with eyes unclouded;
In this flesh I then shall see Jesus Christ eternally.**

*Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense
Christian Worship 167 st. 1, 3, & 5*

General Fund Analysis

By Al Todd

Treasurer's Report as Of August 2022 Month End

The General Fund comprises money (offerings) that is used for the on-going ministry and operations at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church. This fund is NOT used for special projects such as the recent building painting project, the purchase of new picnic tables for the front of the church, and similar “off-budget” projects. It can be looked at as what it takes to fund our day-to-day Gospel outreach ministry. This includes everything from monthly utility bills, to maintenance, and compensation for our called worker.

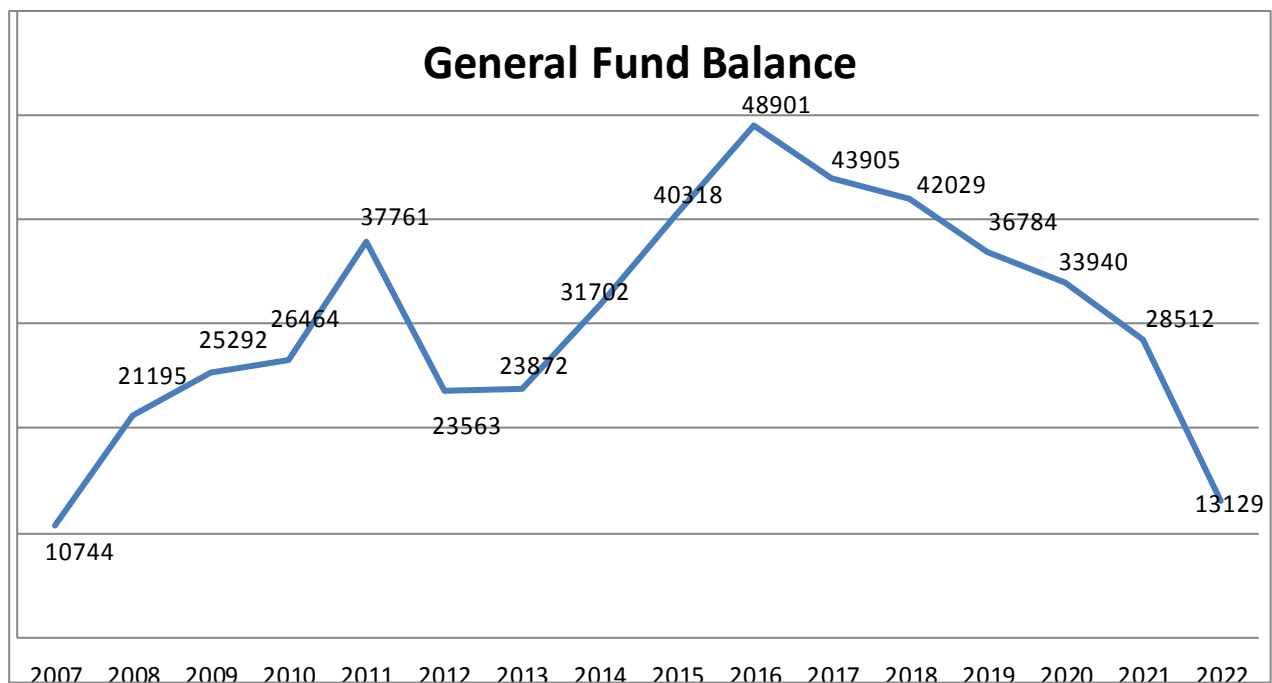
As can be seen by the accompanying graph of the General Fund Balance, we are at an almost historic low in the General Fund at \$13,129. This amount, \$13,129, is one month's support. The balance was only lower 15 years ago in 2007 when almost everything (gas, electricity, water, etc.) was much cheaper.

Is it possible our personal offerings are not keeping up with expenses? We are falling short by about \$2,500 per month on average for the past 18 months with a precipitous drop since year end 2021.

Although there are a variety of reasons for the decrease in giving, it most generally coincides with the most recent pandemic and the associated lock downs and other restrictions imposed by both the Federal and State governments. Recent Christian church surveys indicate a very significant drop in the number of people attending worship services in all denominations.

I offer this explanation because we have been blessed with the same faithful Lord and Savior, the same church location, the same basic activities, regular worship opportunities, bible classes, and the same Pastor as when we were meeting and sometimes exceeding our projected offerings.

So, we need to ask ourselves are we taking Paul's words to heart—excel in the grace of giving?



Goleta Beach, Bike, and BBQ

by Alan Todd

On Sunday afternoon, August 28, Our Redeemer hosted a Beach, Bike, and BBQ event at Goleta Beach. We began arriving in Area C at Goleta Beach around noon where we had reserved tables and a BBQ pit. It was an overcast, cool morning but the marine layer slowly burned off as the afternoon progressed.

The gear and food for the event was trucked in and after quickly preparing the site (covering the tables, arranging the plates and utensils, etc.), we all gathered around for a prayer of thanksgiving for all of God's blessings.

Pastor prepared brats on the BBQ and members bought in food from home including side dishes and several desserts. Condiments, side dishes, and drinks were set out as a buffet and everyone served themselves.

After about an hour of eating and fellowship around the picnic tables, a ring throw game brought in by Sue and Emily was set up, and friendly competition followed. It was great to be able to walk along the beach and even the pier (for those wanting a longer walk). Goleta beach offers a full on kid's playground as well.



Folks started to head for home around 2:30 P.M. and, after returning the area back to normal, the clean-up crew headed back to the church. A very enjoyable 3 hours at the beach and no one went home hungry.

Please keep these events in mind when you plan your weekly schedule. In addition to affording a great opportunity for fellowship, they are perfect for inviting guests who can get to know church members in an informal setting.



Friends in Christ

September 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.

September 8th - Roseanne C.

September 24th - Kathy B.

September 30th - Pastor Proeber



The Outreach Committee meets monthly and plans activities through which the members of Our Redeemer can plant the seeds of the Gospel in the lives of their family members, friends, and neighbors who need to know Jesus.

Some of these activities are attached to a worship service. Others are non-worship events—Beach-Bike-Barbeque, Reformation “fest” and the Pre-Thanksgiving Pot-luck.

The goal is to build relationships with people through which they can be introduced to the Lord, his Word, and our congregation.

The end of the Church Year offers many opportunities to invite people to come. Make the most of every opportunity!

Outreach Opportunities

Fall Festival

This is a first for Our Redeemer. A late afternoon activity is planned for all our members, as well as families in the community. It starts at 4:00 pm and goes until 6:00 pm. Activities will include a chili cook-off and best pie contest. There will also be a face painter, a mini pumpkin patch, pumpkin decorating for the kids, family photos and various games to fill the afternoon. It is scheduled for **Saturday, October 15th**.

What we need is people to attend and participate. It is for all ages, and it offers us the opportunity to build relationships with people and families in our community. Sign up sheets and planning information will be presented over the next two weeks. Let's all work together to make this an enjoyable activity, and an opportunity to plant the seeds of the Gospel!

Reformation Fest

On **Sunday, October 23rd**, we will gather for an evening of friendship, food, and education. The evening will begin at 5:30 pm with Part One of the DVD series, “This Changed Everything.” It explores how the Reformation started, and the changes it brought about.

After the DVD, we will enjoy a pot-luck style dinner. While German recipes would be welcome, the menu will not be limited to these items alone. We will need main course items, side dishes and desserts.

The evening closes with dessert and friendship. Plan today to come, and to bring along your friends.

Please note, parts two and three will be presented during the Wednesday evening Bible Class on October 26th and November 2.

Thanksgiving

On **Sunday, November 20th** at 5:30 pm, we will hold our annual pre-Thanksgiving pot-luck and fellowship. It is always an enjoyable evening with plenty of good food to go around.

In conjunction with our pot-luck, we will also have our regular Thanksgiving worship service. It will be **Thursday, November 24th** at 9:30 am. In so many ways we have seen the Lord's rich blessing, and want to “give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, and his love endures forever.”

Advent

The first Sunday of Advent will be **November 27th**. During our regular 9:30 am worship service we will prepare ourselves to meet our coming Savior. Don't let this time of year catch you unprepared!

Notes & News

Handbell Choir

Practice for the Fall—Reformation, Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas—will begin shortly on Monday evenings at 7:00 pm. We are thankful for those who generously gave of their time and efforts in the past to make practices and ring for our worship services.

There is also an invitation—if you are curious, or if you would like to try ringing—to speak with Debbie.

New ringers are always welcome, and can be worked into the Fall ringing schedule.

Instrumentalists

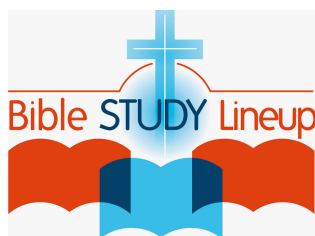
We are always looking for ways to include people and music into our worship service. If you have a particular ability, please do not hesitate to speak to Pastor Proeber regarding your participation. There are opportunities to help with pre- and post-service music, or introducing a hymn.

Sunday Morning Bible Class

As always there is a scheduled class after the worship service. Our regular study includes

“digging deeper” into one of the lessons for the day. This provides additional insights and applications which are very helpful. Occasionally there is homework for the following week. Bible Class begins at 11:00 am every Sunday after worship.

Wednesday Evening Bible Class



Beginning Wednesday, September 14th at 7:00 pm, we will have the opportunity to study God's Word and receive the benefits from that study.

Throughout the course of the fall—about 4-6 weeks—we will devote class time to prepare ourselves to be more effective witnesses of the Gospel. The course, prepared by the Commission on Evangelism, includes video clips, discussion,

and role playing. There are four parts —

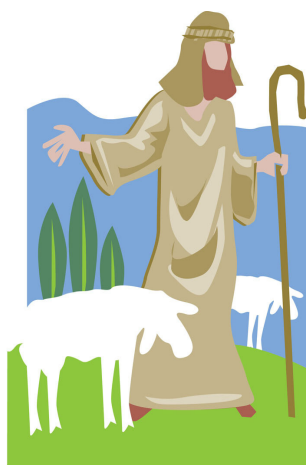
- Reaching people who need Jesus
- Starting a spiritual conversation
- Sharing our Savior
- Keep on sharing Jesus

Plan on attending to build your confidence in the Lord, and sharing his precious Word with those who desperately need to know it.

Sunday School

Once again we will offer Christian Education for young children. Sunday School will be held again during the fall. A starting date is being planned because of some schedule conflicts.

The goal of our Sunday School is to help parents train their children in the fear and knowledge of the Lord.





Reporters Wanted

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

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

Email to Pastor Proeber (pastor.orlcsb@gmail.com)

A simple and rewarding way to serve!

Thank you to Al Todd for his two articles, as well as Sonja Todd for her picture from the Beach, Bike, Barbeque. There is a standing invitation to provide material for the *Reporter*. Throughout the past volumes, articles authored by members have made every issue more interesting. If you have an idea, and you are not sure whether to act on it, please don't hesitate to speak to Pastor Proeber for advice. Thanks!

Meetings for September

Church Council	Tuesday, September 6th at 7:00 pm
Board of Elders	Tuesday, September 6th at 8:00 pm
Outreach Committee	Tuesday, September 20th at 7:00 pm

Congregational Meeting will be October 16th follow 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.



October 30th—Reformation Celebration

Every year the Los Angeles Circuit gathers for a celebration of the Reformation. It is hosted by St. Paul's First Lutheran Church in North Hollywood. There is a special liturgy, a children's choir, a mixed voice choir, and various musicians. The day is made special by the guest speaker for the day. In the past we have heard District Presidents, Missionaries, Seminary Professors, and some of the pastors from within our own Circuit.

This coming Tuesday, more details regarding this special service will be provided. Sadly, for the last two years COVID has caused the service to be cancelled. God-willing we will have the opportunity to gather with our brothers and sisters in the Circuit, and enjoy a meal after the service.

Watch for more details coming in October.



Don't Forget!

We will host the Fall Rally this year. More information is on the table in the back of the church. We will need lots of help for preparation, food, and just being helpful on the day of the rally. Please speak with Sonja Todd for more information, and to see where you can lend a hand. Registration begins at 8:30 am.

September 2022

Church Office: 967-1128

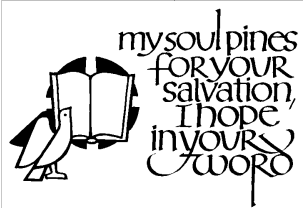
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Parsonage Phone: 967-3570

Grow in Grace!

Encourage one another!

Proclaim what we have seen and heard!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					2 Office Hours 10:30—2:30 pm	3 Clean Martin Lawn beginning the 4th—J. Schroeder
4 LORD'S SUPPER Worship & Streaming 9:30 am Christian Education 11:00 am	5	6 Church Council 7:00 pm Committees 8:00 pm			9 Office Hours 10:30—2:30 pm	10 Clean Pettus
11 Worship & Streaming 9:30 am Christian Education 11:00 am	12 Handbells (TBD)	13 Pastor's Circuit Study 9:30 am	14 Bible Class 7:00 pm Equipping Members	15	16 Office Hours 10:30—2:30 pm	17 Clean Proeber Lawn beginning the 18th—Florez
18 Worship & Streaming 9:30 am Christian Education 11:00 am	19 Handbells (TBD) 7:00 pm	20 Outreach Meeting 7:00 pm	21 Bible Class 7:00 pm Equipping Members	22	23 Office Hours 10:30—2:30 pm	24 Clean Scheffler
25 Worship & Streaming 9:30 am Christian Education 11:00 am	26 Handbells (TBD) 7:00 pm	27	28	29	30 Office Hours 10:30—2:30 pm	October 1st Clean L. Schroeder
	<div> <div>←</div> <div>Pastor Proeber will be gone through Thursday</div> <div>→</div> </div>					