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The Reporter

November 2022

The Reporter

Volume 20, Issue 5

“Some Thoughts on Apologetics”

by Pastor Proeber

There are many who believe apologetics is the only way to claim souls for Christ. Before one can agree or disagree with this statement, definitions have to be established. Some will describe apologetics as the defense of the faith. Sadly, this can become a way to crush the opposition and put a notch in one's holster. This is not what the Apostle Peter had in mind when he wrote by divine inspiration, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that is in you. But speak with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15-16).

The word which offers the translation “give an answer,” is “apologia” in the Greek. It is a word which has a nuanced meaning. It can mean give a defense. This is the way it was used in the ***Apology of the Augsburg Confession***. Those who made and stood on that confession maintained, “we will defend it even if it means we could lose everything.” Another way to consider it is to explain clearly, concisely, and confidently what we believe concerning Jesus Christ. This explanation is done as Peter instructs, “with gentleness and respect.” It is a process which takes time to establish a relationship from which continued conversations can come.

This is the way Peter intended apologia to be used—as a way to woo people to the Gospels, not to drive them away with doctrinal correctness. So, what does this process look like? Recently I attended a workshop where three significant words were offered: possibly, probably, and certainty. Two can be achieved by apologetics. One cannot.

Certainty cannot be established by apologetics. Certainty is faith. It is the faith to which the writer to the Hebrew Christians writes: “Faith is being sure about what we hope for, and being convinced about things we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1). This faith can only come through the hearing of the Word of God and the powerful working of the Holy Spirit (Romans 10:17). Apologetics will never bring a person to faith or give them the certainty of eternal life through Jesus Christ. At the same time, apologetics can be a prelude, or an appetizer to the message of the Gospel.

We live in a world where opinions are getting more and more entrenched.

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People don’t like to listen to opposite views. They don’t even want to consider what they may hold true could be questionable at best. Apologetics can help “break the ice” as it were. This is when the two afore-mentioned words become applicable—possibly and probably.

In our conversations with people there are often strong opinions shared. Things like creation, universal condemnation, universal justification, the authority and reliability of the Scriptures are often rejected. As believers we can not begin to fathom why people could reject them. So, either we argue with them, or we simply don’t engage them.

Neither is helpful for their eternal welfare. What we never want to do is come out wielding the sword of the Spirit and shield of faith to battle them as if they were our mortal enemy. It may make us feel good if we put them in their place, but what have we actually accomplished?

A better approach would be to engage them. Asking questions is a good way to begin. What evidence do you have which makes you so confident? It allows them the opportunity to give their position. You can also follow with some simple questions. “What is the origin of matter, energy, or of anything?” If there is a “big bang,” there must be a “big banger.” “If things started from some cosmic primordial goop, where did that originate?” The idea is not to prove them wrong, but to get them to admit it is possible someone or something had to be the originator. A subsequent conversation could lead them to agreeing it is possible there was someone or something intelligent who designed everything.

The same process can be used for the Scriptures. Many conclude there were alterations and embellishments made over time. Consequently, the Scriptures cannot be reliable. A good approach is use their own criteria for judging other historical records or literature. If they used the same argument, nothing could be accepted as true. In many instances, more time passed between the inked originals and subsequent manuscripts than with the Scriptures. Also there are many more manuscripts and more widespread sources than Julius Caesar’s history of the Gallic Wars—which by the way is readily accepted as genuine. Doesn’t this allow for the possibility, or even the probability that the Scriptures and their account of Jesus could be true?

This is where apologetics can be helpful. You could look at the process as a farmer preparing his field to receive seed. It is plowed. It is smoothed. It is furrowed. Then the seed is planted. A farmer simply doesn’t throw seed on the ground and expect it to grow. So it is with us.

Leading a person to the truth of the Scriptures is a process. One that is done with gentleness and respect. It is also one we delight in doing, and for which we readily prepare ourselves. This is why our Lord has us here—to be witnesses to everything we have heard, seen, and believed.

There is the old proverb which says you don’t talk about politics or religion. I would agree with the first half. I don’t believe our Savior would agree with the second. We are his disciples. We

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are his witnesses. We are his ambassadors. We carry the life saving message of the Gospel with us at all times. This is why we consider it our privilege and responsibility to —

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that is in you. But speak with gentleness and respect”

If you would like more information about apologetics and how it helps in preparing people to receive the Gospel, please check out the YouTube site for Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Thousand Oaks. You will be able to watch the presentation which was given on Saturday, November 6th by the Rev. Dr. Michael Berg. He is a professor of theology at Wisconsin Lutheran College. He also teaches apologetics at WLC and Wisconsin Lutheran High School. There are two sessions of about two hours each.

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!

There is always 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!



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

1st Sonja T.
7th Erle W. P.
10th Carl S.
16th Emmalee S.
22nd Jacob M.
24th Darby J.

2022 Reformation Services

On Sunday, October 30th, we had two opportunities to observe the Reformation. One was at Our Redeemer. The other was at St. Paul's First in North Hollywood. The 9:30 service directed our attention to what really matters in life. It was the same thing which was important to Luther. The foundation of the Word of Truth and the precious work of Jesus Christ. Without these we build our lives on nothing but shifting sand.



The afternoon service in North Hollywood was the first in three years. Nonetheless, it picked up where the last one left off in 2019. Rev. Em. Ernest Zimdars was the festival speaker. Rev. Timothy Wahl from St. Paul's was the liturgist. There was also the Children's Choir, the Mixed Voice Choir, and the instrumental ensemble.

Following the service there was time for fellowship during a catered dinner. It was good to see so many faces again and renew special friendships.

In 2023 the observation of the Reformation will be Sunday, October 29th. We will again have two opportunities to give thanks to the Lord for the blessing of his pure, error free Word. We will also have the privilege to thank him for our rescue—by faith alone, by Scripture alone, by grace alone, and by Christ alone.

“Fall Festival”

On October 15th, we tried something new—a fall festival. We thank Emily Schroeder for her idea, as well as the time and effort she put into making it happen. There was a chili cook-off and a pie judging contest. In addition, a variety of beverages and popcorn was offered. The biggest hit was the tractor ride. The trailer was hitched up and throughout the afternoon children—small and big—were treated to a ride around the church property. The last event of the afternoon was the selection of just the right pumpkin and decorating it with carvings and paint.

There was something for everyone, and we were able to contact five families through advertising and personal invitation. All enjoyed the afternoon and filled out contact cards for future events.

Thanks to everyone who helped make the afternoon so special! Watch for more events and opportunities to invite people to Our Redeemer. Also, if you have any ideas, please share them with Josh Schueler or Pastor Proeber.



3rd Quarterly Meeting Minutes

By Carl Schueler



The Third Quarterly Congregational meeting was called to order by Greg Grunewald, Sunday, October 16th following the worship service. Pastor Proeber opened with a prayer. Nine voting and six non-voting members present.

Outreach

The recording and streaming of our worship service continues without any problems or glitches.

Josh reported there was advertising done via Google for the Fall Festival.

He will present a report at the next Council meeting with analytics.

With services returning to normal, advertising will begin for regular services, as well as for special services—Thanksgiving and Christmas.

The Fall Festival was held and there was a good turn out of members. In addition there were five non-member families who attended.

Other ideas for maintaining continuing contact with families from the Fall festival will be investigated and undertaken (Easter, VBS, etc.)

Pastor's report

Visits for home bound members took place. In addition two other people were added to "private visits." Matt Bennett and Cliff Talgo will both be visited by pastor.

Visits to inactive members were made through the quarter

The Status Report showed that ministry is stable with worship, Bible Study, and handbells being the chief focus.

For the remainder of the year, special worship services will include the End Times, Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas. Together with these there will be other activities

There are a few outstanding projects the pastor plans to finish as time and opportunity allow. One that is pending is the delivery and assembly of the new picnic tables for outside the front doors.

We hosted the Golden West Circuit of the LWMS, and it was a special day for all who attended. Thanks to everyone who worked so hard to make it that way.

There will be a Circuit Reformation Service on Sunday October 30th, at St. Paul's First, North Hollywood.

Property:

Jim Brown reported on a number of accomplishments through the quarter.

The parsonage was tented for termites and a new cook top was installed.

The painting of the Church was completed.

The upgrade of the men's rest room to handicapped accessible was completed before the LWMS Fall Rally.

Church windows and screens were washed.

New picnic tables were ordered and will be delivered shortly

Future tasks include completing 5 year property plans.

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Financial Secretary:

General fund 3 rd quarter offerings	\$ 29,275
Total Offerings	\$ 30,657

Treasurer:

General fund balance, July 1st	\$ 18,510
3 rd quarter offerings	\$ 29,275
3 rd quarter expenses	\$ 35,888
General fund Balance, September 30th	\$ 11,897

WELS Investment Fund (Endowment Fund)

Beginning Balance, July 1st	\$382,351
Ending Balance, September 30th	\$358,052

WELS Investment Fund (Church Improvement Fund)

Beginning Balance, July 1st	\$2,277
Ending Balance, September 30th	\$2,133

WELS Investment Fund (Family Assistance Fund)

Beginning Balance, July 1st	\$3,784
Ending Balance, September 30th	\$3,543

New Business:

A recommendation was brought from the Council to the voters to withdraw \$7,500 from the Endowment Fund and deposit it into the General Fund to cover short falls for the remainder of the 2022. The motion was made and seconded. It was approved.

Announcements:

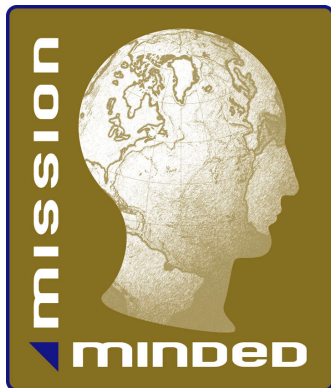
Next outreach meeting Tuesday, October 13th at 7:00 pm
 Next Council meeting Tuesday, November 8th at 7:00 pm
 Next Voter's meeting Sunday, January 15, 2023 following worship service

The meeting adjourned with the Doxology

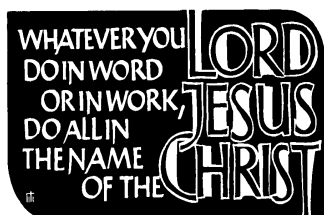
Editor's note

For attendee convenience, congregational meetings are held following refreshments after the regular Sunday service. The Council invites all the members of Our Redeemer to attend and participate—just raise your hand to be recognized to offer comments, suggestions or questions for the Council regarding ministry, property issues, or other concerns. Make sure you set the date—January 15th after Sunday service—aside and plan to attend. Your participation will enhance our ministry, and fulfill the Lord's desire to serve him with gladness!

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!



Up-coming Events include:

Pre-Thanksgiving Pot Luck. Everything begins at 5:30 pm on November 20th. Plan on bringing something to the meal—main course, side dish, or dessert. Just as important, bring yourself and a friend!

Thanksgiving Day Worship. We will have our regularly scheduled service of praise at 9:30 am on November 24th. Come and give thanks to the Lord our God!

The Celebration of Advent. On November 27th the preparation for the coming of our Savior will begin. There will be four regular Sunday services which will follow Isaiah's prophecy in chapter 9—"A Glorious Light has Dawned!"

November 27th -

A Light for those walking in the darkness of sin

December 4th -

A Light for those living in the darkness of death

December 11th -

A Light for those enduring the burden of sadness

December 18th -

A Light for those who trust in the Lord's promise

The Birth of our Savior.

In celebration of our Savior's birth, we will hold two services. Our Christmas Eve service will be Saturday, December 24th at 7:00 pm. It will feature music, songs, and readings which proclaim the great good news—Jesus Christ is born!

The Christmas Day service will be Sunday, December 25th at 9:30 am. Make sure you include both services as part of your Christmas plans.

Following both services there will be time for fellowship. Please bring along the usual things to snack on—cookies, candies, dips, chips, etc.

Also, don't forget we will have our church decorating and chili dinner on Sunday, December 18th!

Notes & News



Handbell Choir

Just after Labor Day the handbell choir began practicing for the up-coming Church Year. The first opportunity to play was for the Reformation Service on October 30th. Once again, the bell choir added another special dimension to the worship service.

We are grateful for the dedicated service of our ringers, as well as Debbie Aitkins for directing the choir and preparing the music.

Through the next few months practice will continue for Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany.

Wednesday Evening



Bible Class

After completing a short summer break, the class began a study on the Apostle Peter. Following that lesson,

the class began the video / discussion series on "Confidently Sharing One's Faith." It was a good class which helped people realize the important of sharing our faith with friends. It also addressed some of the concerns regarding how we do it. Currently a new class began which covers the history of the Reformation from Luther forward to modern times. It is titled, "This Changed Everything." There is still time to attend the Wednesday evening class at 7:00 pm.

Sunday Morning Bible Class

The morning class is typically based on one of the lessons from the day. It makes for a single unit. It also allows for flexibility because so many of our families travel. Bible Class starts at 11:00 following coffee and fellowship. Plan on attending!

Sunday School

In September the new quarter started, and we are well into the new session. In a matter of weeks, lessons will include the coming and birth of Jesus Christ.

Remember Sunday School meets on the second and fourth Sundays of the month during the worship service.

If you have any questions, please speak with Sonja Todd or Pastor Proeber

Also, if you are interested in becoming involved in teaching, please speak with Pastor for more information.

New and Possible Opportunities

We are always looking for new opportunities for service, outreach, study, worship, and encouragement. Please share your suggestions with Greg Grunewald, Josh Schueler, Jim Brown, or with Pastor Proeber.

November 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
		1	2 Bible Class 7:00 pm Confidently Sharing One's Faith	3	4 Office Hours 10:30-12:30 pm	5 Clean Aitkins Apologetics Work- shop 9:30 am Prince of Peace, Thousand Oaks
	6 LORD'S SUPPER Worship & Stream- ing 9:30 am Christian Education 11:00 am	7 Handbell Choir Practice 7:00 pm	8 Pastor's Circuit Study 9:30 am Church Council 7:00 pm Committees	9 Bible Class 7:00 pm "This Changed Eve- rything" Part 1	10 Outreach / Fellow- ship Meeting 7:00 pm	11 Office Hours 10:30-12:30 pm
13 Worship & Stream- ing 9:30 am Christian Education 11:00 am	14 Handbell Choir Practice 7:00 pm	15	16 Bible Class 7:00 pm "This Changed Eve- rything" Part 2	17	18 Office Hours 10:30-12:30 pm	19 Clean Everson
20 Worship & Stream- ing 9:30 am Christian Education 11:00 am Pre-Thanksgiving Dinner—5:30 pm	21 Handbell Choir Practice 7:00 pm		23 No Bible Class	24 THANKSGIVING DAY WORSHIP 9:30 am	25 Office Hours 10:30-12:30 pm	26 Clean Favuzzi Lawn beginning 27th - Pettus
27 ADVENT I Worship & Stream- ing 9:30 am Christian Education 11:00 am	28 Handbell Choir Practice 7:00 pm		30 Bible Class 7:00 pm Video Series "This Changed Eve- rything" Part 3			