



February 2020



The Fitness of Redeemer, How does it Measure Up?

Below is what I addressed before the Voters’ Assembly on January 19. It is what I believe to be an accurate assessment of Redeemer’s circumstance physically, financially, and spiritually. Upon your reading of this piece, if you would like to respond to it, please feel free to direct your thoughts to me personally. Write your thoughts down and then send them to me in any one of the many ways that is convenient for you. I appreciate and respect your thoughts and opinions.

The state of the parish, that is, the condition, the physical, financial and spiritual fitness of the parish – the church – might be better evaluated by the condition, the physical, financial and spiritual fitness of the parish’s pastor. Let’s see if this is a fair barometer for measure.

You all know for the last three plus years I, and my wife, Lisa, have been training, running in marathons and other such competitive races. We exercise. We eat healthy. We are physically active to be sure. So from the sound of things, the physical fitness of the pastor seems to be in good order, thanks, mostly in part, to his loving wife of 32 years. But if the truth be told, personally I don’t train as well as I know I should. I don’t exercise as often as I know I need to in order to become stronger, to endure 26.2 miles successfully. And what hurts my training and exercising the most is the fact that I don’t eat as healthy as I know I should. You know we have such amazing cooks and bakers here at Redeemer. Our family breakfasts and midweek dinners are dangerous to my training. But, I love all the food provided at these gatherings.

Because of my weaknesses to these things, I don’t finish marathons as well as I would like. Subsequently it generates an ugly and negative attitude within me. Furthermore, my performance in all things in life suffers. I want to be clear here, there is no one to blame except myself. I take full responsibility for my shortcomings and where I have fallen short of personal goals. And the reason why is because I don’t dedicate or sacrifice as I know I should. I have a desire to train, to exercise, and eat healthy, but I am weak. Yes, you all know the saying from scripture, “the spirit is willing but the body is weak.”

Seeing that I have truthfully not performed well physically, let’s move on to the next area for examination – financial fitness. In this evaluation, this may come as a mighty awakening. I must state and confirm first of all, that I am thankful for the compensation package I have been offered to me throughout my entire pastorate. In each of the two congregations that I have been called to serve, both have supplied my family and me with health care insurance and a salary that provides for a roof over our heads, food on the table, clothes on our back, a vehicle to travel, and much more. Financially, God provides me with all my family and I need. So far so good, right? Well, this is all God’s doing. What about what I do with it?

Although God supplies me with all the financial resources I need, I am not always the best steward of these financial provisions. There are times when I carelessly spend beyond my means; that I make unwise financial decisions; that I don’t plan for the future making the common mistake of living in the now, rather than providing for my family after my time here on earth is done. I know I need to make wis-

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er decisions. I know I need to make the financial sacrifices, spending less on frivolous things and planning a better future for after I retire and for when I am gone to my eternal home. I know I need to make these hard financial sacrifices now in order to become financially free later. I know I need to be content with all the things God has given me and not to selfishly and sinfully satisfy my squandering desires when He – the Lord God – already fills my cup to overflowing with all that I need in this body and life. I know all these things, but again, I am weak.

But please indulge me with this one little truth about financial stewardship. Our household, the Jim & Lisa Kress household, even before entering into the ministry, always gave and supported the church with our tithes as well as our time, talents, and skills. The Bible says that Abraham gave a tenth of all he had (Gen 14:20), that is, everything he had. The Word of God also reveals, “Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor 9:7). To be sure, I am not Abraham, but our household gives cheerfully, joyfully what we have decided in our hearts.

We began a number of decades to commit to giving a percentage of our household income. It didn’t begin with a tenth, but with a single digit number. At the time, it was a big sacrifice for us because we never committed to that kind of trust in God. Each year we made attempts to go 1 percentage point higher than the previous year. Sometimes we made that commitment and other times we decided to remain at that previous year’s commitment. My point is we always gave, cheerfully and joyfully, trusting that the Lord would provide for us in the current year just as He did in the previous years.

I’m still not Abraham. I still don’t give a tenth, but I will tell you that we trust in the Lord, that we give to the Lord’s work 8% of our entire household income (that’s before taxes, before expenses, that’s first-fruit giving). It is our intension to always give more, whether an increase in our household income occurs or not. And this year, 2020, based on the discussion at our December town hall, our household is giving that additional \$16 every week above what we have already committed to give, whether we are present in worship service or not. This is what our household has committed to do in order that the Lord’s work here at Redeemer Lutheran Church will continue today and for generations to come. What the faithful have done in the past, I commit to do in the present, in order that others may get to do it in the future.

Although it may appear like it, do not be mistaken, I am

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SERVING THE LORD

Pastor Rev. James Kress

Child Care Director Wendy Horvath

Office Admin Asst Caitlin Tilton

Organist Bill Bowers

Choir Director Collins Sita

Newsletter Editor Pat Finkenbine

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Vice President Bill Bowers

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Youth Alan Duburg

Financial Secretary Mindy Duncan

Property Mgmt. Bob Varone

GROUPS/GUILDS

Ladies Guild Sally Zierdt

Men’s Group

Altar Guild

Coffee Hour

not boasting in myself. I am boasting in the Lord. I am boasting in the Lord for all what He provided me and my family in the past and for what I trust He will provide me today and in the future.

So that's the sum of the financial fitness of the pastor. Overall, it's good. By the grace of God through the members of the congregation, the pastor is provided. And yet, because of his weakness, he could always give more in his time, in his talents, in the use of his skills, and in the giving of his tithe cheerfully.

With that all said we can all assume that perhaps the spiritual fitness of the pastor must then be in superior shape because he's the pastor, right? After all, he's the called and sent servant of our Lord Jesus Christ. Spiritually speaking, he must be rock solid. Man o man, if it was only true and if it was that easy being the Lord's called and sent servant. To be honest, I don't read the Word of God as often as I should; I don't study the Word of God as closely as I should; I don't pray as frequently as I should; and I certainly don't worship our Triune God the way He calls me to worship Him the way that I should. Truly I am a weak, poor miserable sinner. And yet, this is who the Lord of the Church calls and sends into the Office of the Holy Ministry – men who are poor miserable sinners.

If we are to determine the state of the parish based upon the physical, financial and spiritual fitness of the pastor, then this parish is in a sad state of affairs. How shall we better determine the state of the parish then?

Perhaps the state of the parish might be better evaluated by the physical, financial and spiritual fitness of the parish's members. Shall we individually examine each and every member and associate member and affiliate member of Redeemer Lutheran Church? Perhaps I can simply ask questions and ask for a show of hands. Maybe that would reveal too much to stomach. Perhaps I can pass out pieces of paper and have each of you write down your answers. Or maybe it would be best that I just ask the questions and allow your consciences to determine the state of the parish. Perhaps there's no harm in doing that.

First, we consider the physical fitness of the parish members: 1) Do you exercise regularly? 2) Do you eat healthy or clean? 3) Do you make the sacrifices necessary to provide your body with the proper nourishment it needs? 4) Do you overindulge in food, alcohol, drugs, pornography, gambling, smoking or vaping? 5) Are you weak or lazy? If you answer "Yes" to any of these questions, you're in no better shape than the parish pastor.

Let's move on, shall we, to some questions regarding the financial vigor of the parish members: 1) Do you believe God provides all that you need in this body and life? 2) Do you thank Him? 3) Do you tithe? Do you give 8 to 10 percent, 3 to 5 percent, or as little as 1 percent of your household's income? 4) Do you give cheerfully to the ministry of the church? 5) Do you give a "first-fruits" of your household's income to the ministry of the church? 6) Does your household commit to giving every week, whether in church or not? 7) Has your household committed this year to give \$8 per person more each week above what is usually given each week? 8) Do you give reluctantly and with bitterness in your heart? To be sure, these are not enjoyable questions. Good thing we're not having a show of hands or writing our answers down. For the answers may prove to be less desirable than the questions being asked.

Shall we move on to the next area of accountability – the spiritual fitness of the parish? 1) Do you faithfully go to church on Sundays and Holidays? 2) Do you frequently receive Holy Communion? 3) Do you read the Bible or devotion every day? 4) Do you attend Bible Class? 5) Do you pray, praise and give thanks in all circumstances? 6) Do you share the Good News of salvation with others?

The Word of God tells us to do all of these things and more. However, I'm going to stop here and direct you to a set of other questions from Dr. Luther's Small Catechism. These questions are in the context of "which sins should one confess" under Confession and Absolution. He writes, "Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments:

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Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, or worker? Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy? Have you been hot-tempered, rude, or quarrelsome? Have you hurt someone by your words or deeds? Have you stolen, been negligent, wasted anything, or done any harm?"

If we were to all answer these questions honestly, we would conclude that the state of the parish, if it is to be measured according to the physical, financial, and spiritual fitness of her members, is just like that of the pastor's condition. We are truly in a sad state of affairs. The Word of God is clear, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

So let us not evaluate the state of the parish by its pastor or members. Rather, let us consider the state of the parish by the physical, financial and spiritual fitness of the parish's Savior – Jesus Christ. Let us take a look, shall we?

Physically the Son of God became flesh. He humbled Himself to be a man, yet without sin. Physically Jesus Christ was conceived and born, grew in stature and wisdom. He is the fulfillment of the Law we are unable to keep. Physically He hungered and He thirsted. He slept and He wept. He got tired and His soul suffered deep distress, sorrow and trouble. Physically He was beaten and scourged. He was crowned with thorns, pressed down into His skull. He was spit upon and laughed at. He was nailed to a tree of wood for sins He never committed. Physically He died. And physically He rose from the dead, defeating sin, death and the devil for you and for me. Physically He ascended into heaven. And finally, He will physically return to judge the living and the dead.

And there's more! Physically He baptizes you into Himself. He gives His Word and promise that He will be with you to the very end of the age. He places His true body and His true blood into your mouth and onto your lips for the forgiveness of sins, the strengthening of your faith, and to grant you everlasting salvation again promising to raise all believers on the Last Day. He comforts you in your sorrow, strengthens you when you are weak. He pro-

vides you with light when dark clouds loom. He has done all things well for you. His Father is well please with Him and you on account of Him.

Financially He is the King of heaven. And being the King of heaven, the Creator of all things, more valuable than the gold He created, just how rich is He? "Though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich" (2 Cor 8:9). You are the treasure hidden in a field, and upon finding you He gives up all He has to purchase you for Himself (Matt 13:4). In Him you have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of your trespasses, according to the riches of His grace ... In Him you have obtained an inheritance (Eph 1:7, 11), having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which God the Father has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward you who believe, according to the working of His great might that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things under His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all (Eph 1:18-23). Know this my dear friends in Christ Jesus, from His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace (John 1:16).

Spiritually Jesus is God. He is the only-begotten of the Father. Jesus is holy and perfect. Jesus is eternal, unchangeable, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. Listen to this: He is each of these, He is all of these, and He is more than these. Spiritually Jesus is rock solid because He is the Rock. He is the foundation upon which the Church, His Church, was founded. He is the Good Shepherd. He leads us and guides us. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is our Savior-Brother. He loves you ... all of you. You are His beloved Bride and He is the Bride Groom.

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Therefore, we can conclude that the best evaluation for the state of the parish is to measure the condition of the parish according to the validity of the Church's Savior. Is the Word of God preached in its truth and purity? Are the Sacraments administered according to Christ's institution?

We may now understand more clearly that we are indeed weak and that He is strong. The spiritual well-being of the Church is measured by the Word of Christ. The spiritual well-

being of the Church's pastor is also measured by the Word of Christ. And the spiritual well-being of the individual members of His body, the Church, is again measured by the Word and promises of Christ. Let us not look at the state of the Church through the lens of our physical eyes, rather let us see the state of the Church through the lens of faith through the Holy Word of God.

Your Forgiven and Redeemed Servant,
Pastor Jim Kress



ASH WEDNESDAY DIVINE SERVICE*
with the Imposition of Ashes
Wed. Feb. 26th – 4:30 & 7:00 PM

MIDWEEK LENTEN SERVICES

*Wed. Mar. 4th – 4:30 PM
Divine Service**

*Wed. Mar. 11th – 4:30 PM
Divine Service**

*Wed. Mar. 18th – 4:30 PM
Divine Service**

*Wed. Mar. 25th – 4:30 PM
Divine Service**

*Wed. Apr. 1st – 4:30 PM
Divine Service**

SUPPER WILL BE SERVED AFTER
MIDWEEK LENTEN SERVICES
Between 5:30 – 6:30 pm

**Service of Holy Communion*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Most of you have determined by now one of my faults, "I'm not a numbers guy". Statistics and percentages do not move me. My other fault is I have a terrible memory. So End of the Year reports full of past performance metrics, gains or losses, graphs and diagrams do nothing for me. But, unfortunately, that's how the world measures itself, tracks failures or successes, and predicts future trends. So I will bore you with these facts and numbers from our past year. But do not believe for an instant that is all that Redeemer Lutheran Church is about. Please.

You have heard so often the sad news of our budget woes, but there are encouraging moments. Our deficit for the year was \$21,451. That at first sounds discouraging. But look at it this way. It was less than the last quarter projections and considerably less than budgeted \$44,000 deficit expected at the beginning of the year. This was due solely to increased giving. Giving was up for the month of December and for the year total. This is a trend that must continue. The Council will be making other cuts in spending but they are small ones like reducing the available number of Portals of Prayer and reducing or eliminating fresh flowers on the altar. Last summer we used funds from our Wind & Hail account which reduced it to \$4492.57. At the beginning of 2019, I fully expected to exhaust that account, but we didn't and we are left with virtually no catastrophic insurance. The Child Care center is the only contributor to this fund at present.

The idea of saving money by converting our lighting to LED started last year was finally researched this month. We met with a representative from Future Energy Solutions. They are a consulting firm that comes into large facilities such as schools, arenas and manufacturing plants and converts all of the lighting over to LED fixtures, and in turn they share a portion of the electrical savings. In our case, since our usage is small, they determined that it wouldn't be cost-effective for us to invest in the expensive cutover. We will switch from incandescent lamps to LEDs on an individual basis where we can.

Dealing with the county government has been an enlightening experience. We are currently in the middle of that process with the new classrooms for the school and we have the permits for the interior renovations of the church.

Let me share with you what does move my heart. What I believe makes Redeemer Lutheran Church special. And that would be its people— loving, sacrificing members of our congregation. It's our efforts, our responsibility to our church that will save it. Not from visitors, strangers or non-members, but from within our own ranks. Our love for this church will strengthen it, with the Lord's help of course. What happened a couple of weeks ago here was what moved me. First, the Ladies Guild donated \$1000 from their treasury designating that \$800 should be used to help pay the bills and the remaining \$200 be used to repair the carillon or church chimes. The same week, a couple in our congregation gave \$7,600 to pay our taxes. Both were wonderful blessings. What inspired me the most was the letter that came with the check for the taxes. This couple referred to Redeemer as "our church". This love, this love for our church is what will guarantee we will be here for the future. That isn't found out on the street—it's right here in the pews, love for one another. *Wade Duncan*



Of the three things a person is not to talk about in polite company – religion, politics, and money – the

church is called, in one way or another, to talk about all three. Perhaps this is the reason why teaching about stewardship often seems to be an afterthought. It's something that happens only out of necessity when financial constraints are already nipping at the heels.

There is a more excellent way. Stewardship shouldn't be the kind of teaching that comes up only when there is a financial crunch. It should be part and parcel of the ongoing instruction of Christians as they live out their faith in their vocations – members of their family, their society, and their church. This teaching touches upon every facet of our lives; it stakes a claim upon our time, our presence, our prayers, and our possessions.

Stewardship begins with the acknowledgment that we are stewards. A steward is a manager of someone else's possessions. In Christian stewardship, we recognize, according to the Apostles' Creed, that God is the owner of all things as the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. And in His fatherly divine goodness and mercy, He gives us what is His to manage here below.

The principal virtue for stewards is faithfulness. As St. Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth:

"Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful." (1 Cor. 4:2)

Stewards must manage that which belongs to the owner according to the owner's wishes. That is what it means to be faithful in stewardship.

That raises a question: How are Christian stewards to be faithful in their managing of what God has entrusted to them to manage? In other words, what are the specific duties of a Christian steward?

This depends upon what God has revealed in His Word for each of our vocations in life as those in a family (fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, children), society (governors or citizens), and the church (pastors or laity). The Table of Duties from *Luther's Small Catechism* lays this out in helpful and orderly way.

Let's look just at what the laity (hearers as it is labeled in the catechism) owe their pastors:

"In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel." (1 Cor. 9:14)

"Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows." (Gal. 6:6–7)

"Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,' and, 'The laborer deserves his wages.'" (1 Tim. 5:17–18)

"We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves." (1 Thess. 5:12–13)

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.” (Heb. 13:17)

We can see that the Lord commands hearers to support the work of the ministry with the gifts God endowed them – their time, their presence, their prayers, and their possessions. This is the means by which God blesses His people with His gifts: the ministry with the support of those whom they serve, and the hearers with the work of the ministry.

St. Paul expounds upon this further in his letters to the church at Corinth. He instructs them to give regularly (1 Cor. 16:1–2), proportionally (1 Cor. 16:1–2; 2 Cor. 8:12), and generously (2 Cor. 8:20) of our first-fruits (1 Cor. 16:2) with a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor. 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor. 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor. 9:7), and love (2 Cor. 8:23).

All of this teaching is set forth squarely within the context of stations to which God calls us. This is always appropriate for the church to speak because it instructs God’s people in how they are to live out their faith as His stewards under those who are created, redeemed, and sanctified by Him.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's December 31, 2019

	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>OVER/UNDER</u>
INCOME	22,755	14,541	8,214
<u>EXPENSES</u>	<u>16,360</u>	<u>18,221</u>	(1,861)
+/-	6,395	(3,680)	
YEAR TO DATE			
INCOME	180,823	174,555	6,268
<u>EXPENSES</u>	<u>202,274</u>	<u>218,651</u>	(16,377)
+/-	(21,451)	(44,096)	

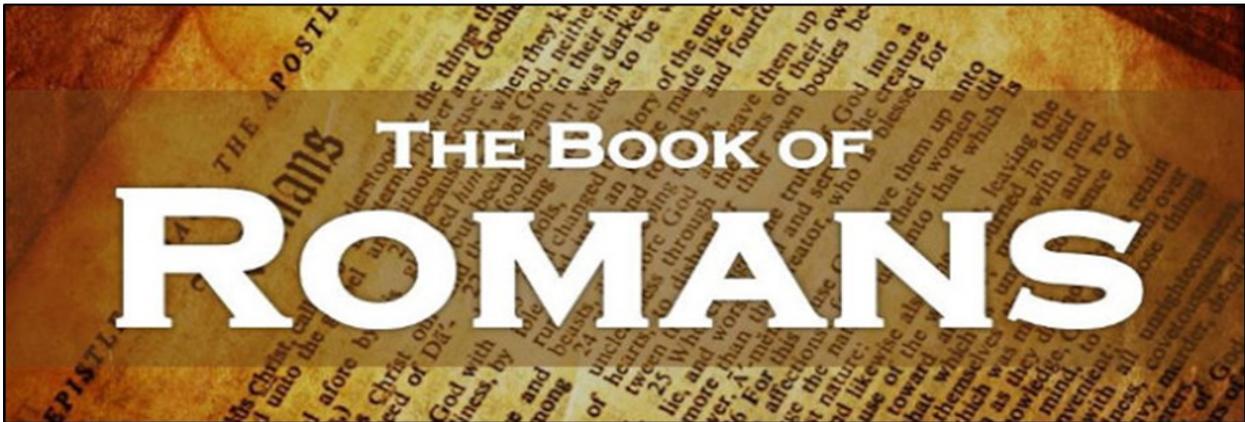


Respectfully submitted,
Jean Clappe-Mixell
North Star Bookkeeping LLC

END OF THE YEAR GIVING STATEMENTS will not be printed and provided to everyone this year in an effort to conserve on the cost of paper, ink, and envelopes. If you would like to have a statement, please notify Mindy Duncan by email (msduncan58@gmail.com) or in writing, and one will be provided to you upon request.

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS IS FOR EVERYONE!

In Paul's Epistle to the Romans, he writes to Christians he has not yet met but intends to visit soon. Since he has not preached in Rome, he writes a full and rich account of God's plan of salvation through faith in His Son and encourages the Romans to live as Christians in this sinful world. Martin Luther thought so highly of this letter he recommended that all Christians memorize the whole book. Although that is not the goal of our Sunday Morning Bible Class, we will nevertheless go through every chapter and verse in order to experience the richness of this impressive letter. There are so many "golden nuggets" to accumulate from this single New Testament book. Don't be shy, be intrigued. Come join in on the study Sunday mornings following Divine Serve and a quick stop at the coffee table.



WEDNESDAY MORNING TABLE TALK

Come Join Us on Wednesday at 10:15 AM

On Wednesday morning, in the Church narthex, we gather with Pastor Kress around tables to talk theology, ask a wide range of interesting questions, and witness our own theology shaped by the Word of God. No one is required to know anything about everything. If you have questions or are interested in listening in on our *Table Talk* you are welcome to join us in some engaging and thought provoking conversations.

PROPERTY APPRECIATION DAY

We sure could use some help on our Property Appreciation Days every month. There is outside work to do and cleaning and dusting that needs done inside the Church. If you can help, please come to the church and we will put you to work. **Our next Property Appreciation Day is Saturday, February 15th at 8:00 am.**



***The deadline for the February Newsletter is February 20th.
Please have all your submissions sent to patchas123@gmail.com
OR drop them off at the church office by the date indicated above. Thank You!***

Why You Should Keep Taking Your Kids To Church Even When It Feels Pointless

Every Sunday families face the monumental challenge of getting out the door and to the service on time. In our house the baby always needs something right as it is time to leave.

By Emily Carrington

After a bottle, a paci, her blanket, and some coaxing, our eight-week-old daughter fell asleep on the way to church. I hoped she would take a morning nap during the service and we would actually focus on worship.

Not ten minutes into the service, she filled her diaper. Out went my husband with my daughter. After they returned, she sat calmly for about two minutes before the fussing began again. I took her to the back to calm her down, but nothing worked. I went back to our seat, grabbed my nursing cover, and headed to the room in the back. Nursing, burping, and more fussing ensued. Before I knew it, the service was over and I had yet to “worship.” I couldn’t help but wonder: Why are we even here? Why do we even try?

Every Sunday is some variation of this routine. In the two to three hours we spend at church, my daughter is bound to need to be changed, fed, and put to sleep. My husband and I are like popcorn as we tend to her needs. I think about the future and realize that things are not going to get easier any time soon.

I remember my parents dutifully bringing us to church and carting us up to the balcony. My grandma would quietly pass out fruit Mentos while we wiggled in our pew. Over the years this pew was where we would doodle on children’s bulletins, sing hymns, and memorize the Lord’s Prayer and the Apostle’s Creed. Slowly, but surely, these words were written on our hearts and the wiggles stopped. My parents’ persistence and regular church attendance wasn’t futile.

Other parents of young children, be encouraged. Your work on Sunday mornings isn’t futile either. Even the worst, most distracted and failed attempts are important, if for no other reasons but the following.

You Are Teaching Your Child that Church Is Important

You wouldn’t be attempting church with children if you didn’t think it was important. Perhaps you have always known church is important or perhaps as a childless adult you were convinced that corporate worship is better than an isolated spiritual life. Either way, you have known the beautiful reality that going to church is part of the spiritual life.

As Russell Moore stated, “we are not simply fueling our individual quiet times with praise choruses. We’re actually ascending to the heavenly places together, standing before Christ and all of his angels on Mount Zion.” But now with children participation in the corporate body feels like a distant reality and heaven isn’t any closer.

Every Sunday families face the monumental challenge of getting out the door and to the service on time. In our house the baby always needs something right as it is time to leave. Some mornings we stop to address her needs and we are late to church. Other mornings we come rolling in with a crying, needy baby. Either way, we are not part of corporate worship in the ways we used to be.

It is easy to find excuses to stay home, but even on the most stressful mornings it is important that Christian parents haul their families to church, even if we just feel like we are going through the motions. Children see what we do and, as my pastor reminds us regularly, they love what we

love. The regular struggle to attend regular worship reinforces to our children that church is a priority.

You Are Creating Habits that Will Smooth the Future

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6.

If we wait until we have perfectly well-behaved children to bring them to church, it is likely Jesus will have already returned. Looking back, things only got more difficult for my parents as my sister and I got older. I have distinct memories of my dad sitting in the station wagon idling in the driveway while my mom herded us out the door.

Once I could drive we would often take three cars to get four people to church because nobody could get out the door on time to suit my father. But we followed his lead. Going to church wasn't debatable, and nobody had to tell us that. This was simply the established order as long as I can remember. It was this habit that pulled me through as I doubted my faith in my adolescence.

While on the subject of behavior and habit-making: what a great way to teach, practice, and live grace. Our salvation isn't dependent on our behavior, so don't make church attendance behavior-dependent, either. Our children need grace, and so do we. Regardless of how the children are acting during worship, if worship involves entering the presence of God, then what better time than with screaming children to experience such a grace.

You Are Introducing Your Kids to a Lifelong Community

So you got to church and you survived the service, but you can't repeat any points from the sermon and your child was throwing a fit so epic no one could focus on the sacraments. Wasted time, right? No.

Your time after the service, while perhaps not as essential as participating in the word and sacrament, is an important part of being part of the body. Your children are meeting peers whom, Lord willing, will be alongside them as they come into their faith.

They are also meeting adults who are praying for them, teaching them, guiding them, and setting an example of a godly life. As an adult, I now see that some of my fiercest prayer warriors are the adults who have prayed for me since my baptism. They prayed for me when I left for college and kept me connected to the body of Christ as I struggled to find a church home in early adulthood.

These peers, prayer warriors, teachers, and mentors are essential to your child's spiritual well-being. We live in a time when fewer and fewer other associations will uphold the gospel. With the secularization of the communities in which we live, our children will lean even more on their church community to help bear the burdens that are inevitable to the human experience.

You Are Building Your Own Community

As I have already stated, perhaps belabored, being part of Christ's body is essential. If you stay home, when do you have a chance to share your needs as well as offer support to others? Perhaps an exhausted tired momma with a screaming baby in the back will remind others to pray for all of the exhausted tired mommas (and especially you). You need the prayer.

You also need to pray for others. As a mother, I surprisingly find myself with more time to pray. This might change in the future, but with one baby I seem to have extra quiet time in my day. I find myself praying on walks, while I am nursing, while I am rocking a sleeping baby. By staying connected to the Christian body, I can use this time to pray for others.

You Are Including Your Children in Christ's Body

You are not just offering your children a like-minded community, you are faithfully including them in the body of Christ. In Acts 16:33 Paul baptizes the whole household of the jailer. In Matthew 19:14, Jesus says, "Let the little children come to me, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." The New Testament makes it clear that there is a place for our wiggly, fussy, and distracting children. Our efforts as parents, however messy, are worth our time, if only to follow the example of both Christ and Paul.

You Are Being Faithful

Perhaps the most important reason to strive for regular church attendance is because it is part of the duty of a Christian parent. This builds on point number five, but it is not just a recognition of children's place in church. Instead, it is acknowledging our responsibility as parents to bring them up in the church.

When we baptized our daughter we promised to instruct, pray with, set an example for, and "endeavor by all the means of God's appointment to bring her up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." These vows echo Paul's words in Ephesians 6:4: "provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

This is an intimidating responsibility, if only for the sheer weight of its consequences. While baptism practices and vows vary between denominations, the responsibility to raise our children according to God's word is an essential responsibility as a Christian parent. And why not do it with the help and guidance of the church?

Take Heart and Keep It Up

So dear parent, rest easy. While Sunday morning might feel more like a wrestling match, a battle of wills, or a circus, your time, efforts, and distracted worship are worth it. Even the messiest and most frustrating days are not wasted. Thank God for his grace—and keep it up.

Emily Carrington is a housewife and nonprofit consultant in Hillsdale, Michigan. She is also a co-founder of the start-up nonprofit organization the Early Pregnancy Loss Association.

Follow her on Twitter: @ecarrington725.

This article appeared in the Federalist on September 25, 2017

<https://thefederalist.com/2017/09/25/keep-taking-kids-church-even-feels-pointless/>



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PRAYERS

SHUT-INS: Judy Clasen, Susan Jahns, Rita Kaufmann, and Donna Weston

HEALING for Members: Neva Aldene, Carl Bertka, Paul & June Brown, Jean Cote, Kathryn Demma, Ed & Jan DeTrow, Charlie & Pat Finkenbine, Mike & Judy Guastella, Bud & Jane Harty, Marva Jonas, Chuck Malecki, Angela Mannato, Ken Mielke, Lillian Miles, Glenn Mossner, Mariana Murray, Bob Payne, Tom & Sue Poyer, Dorothy Sinowetski, Russ & Carol Spooner, Ron Tandy, Caitlin Tilton, Bob Varone, Robert Vickey, Sally Zierdt, and Artie Zipp

FRIENDS & RELATIVES: Michelle Bernard, Grace Blum, Gerry Borwick, Bill Bowers, Jr., Mary Brissette, Dennis Burchell, Georgia Bush, Diane Carr, Sally Chambers, Esther Clapham, Bobbett Clark, Donna Connors, Lisa Copeman, Martin Cressman, Molly Criely, Renee Dempsey, Dale & Trudy DesJardins, Irene DiTommaso, Barb Dumeah, Bruce Everson, Donna Fancher, Darla Finkenbine, Gerald and Mary Fischer, Marla Flores, Manual Galan, Liam Garland, Barbara George, Sandra Gettings, Nancy Gleis, Mary Ann Guilfoyle, Shelley Roedel Gutz, Mikayla Hacksunda & her newborn baby girl, Lily, Marlene Hagen, Jake Harper, Debbie Harrison, Larry Hladun, Dennis Hegarty, Claudette Hendershot, Glory Herget, John Hill, Rick Hill, Robin Hincman, Roger Hinzmann, David Hirtle, Larry Hladun, Linda Holt,

John Hunter, Linda Hunter, Chelsea Hutchinson, Stanley and Lynne Jablonski, Larry Jackson, Bill Jaquest, Heather Johnson, Rachel Kagay, Daniel & Michelle Kalstrup, John Kearns, Barb Kern, Rev. Michael Kettner, Elizabeth Lynn Klopfenstein, Nancy Lake, Stacey Lampert, Rev. Rusty Leavitt, friends & family of Gary Letizia, Ray Likowski, Janet Lixey, Victoria Malato and her unborn child, Joe Manson, Candace McGowan, Barbara Mier, Pete Mogg, Mike Morrissey, Rev. Herbert Mueller, Ron Mullins, Esther Murphy, Jean Nesbitt, Riley Emilia Paquette, Charles Pentecost Jr., Robin Potts, John Purdy, Mary Raines, Elaine Reebe, Rev. Ronald Rock, Paul Rollo, Sandra Scheel, Ed Sheahan, Nancy Sly, Don Stewart, Charles Tolley, George Vespa, Jim & Judy Wahl, Steven Walker, Christy Wallace, Helen Weishaar, Gordan Winkel, Wava Zeitlow, and Martha Zimpfer

Military Personnel: Mark Baranowsky, Michael Broughton, Joseph Garay, Thomas Francis Stynes II, Brian Jackson, Jonathan Koen, and Charles D. Weishaar



Pastor and members of the church are always willing to pray for you, family members and friends. If a loved one appears on our prayer list above, please call Pastor or the church office to give us a health update so that we may either keep or remove their name. Thank you!



ELDER & COMMUNION ASSISTANT SCHEDULE

Date	Elder & Reader	Communion Asst
Sun, Feb 2nd	Collins Sita	Bob Varone
Sun, Feb 9th	Rob Tilton	Dave Giroux
Sun, Feb 16th	Collins Sita	Steve Horvath
Sun, Feb 23rd	Mike Nagel	Bob Varone
Wed, Feb 26th	4:30- Mike Nagel 7:00- Rob Tilton	Paul Brown Steve Horvath

Acolyte

Gospel Bearer & Crucifier

Date	Crucifier	Gospel Bearer	Acolyte
Feb 2nd	Alyssa Hancock	Rylie Giroux	Brianna Neef
Feb 9th	Kamrie Evanicki	Jayden Bishop	Kyleigh Evanicki
Feb 16th	Mackenzie McDowall	Braeden Dolphin	Therin McDowall
Feb 23rd	Mykalina Sabol	Kylee Payne	Bella Fisher
Feb 26th	4:30- Toby Hancock	n/a	Therin McDowall

ALTAR GUILD SCHEDULE



Date	Set-Up	Clean-Up
Sun, Feb 2nd	Mindy Duncan	Lisa Kress
Sun, Feb 9th	Lisa Kress	Catalina Bakas Joyce Schneider
Sun, Feb 16th	Bob Varone	Sandi Libke Gale Bakalik
Sun, Feb 23rd	Mindy Duncan	Bob Varone
Wed, Feb 26th	Bob Varone	Lisa Kress

It's February and we are now in our third quarter of the school year. When I was thinking about what to write about this month, the word Love kept coming to mind. Yes, it's February, and love seems to be in the air, but the word LOVE goes so much deeper than we can ever imagine. When I was growing up there was a popular group among my friends named Petra. Petra has a song named Love. It reminds us of 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails." Love is God sending His son and forgiving all we have done. Love shows the world what the Son of God has done. So it is my prayer this month that I can show the love of Jesus not only to our students, but to those in this world that may need to see that there is someone that loves them unconditionally. There are so many people that need to know the power of the love of Jesus.

January 27-31 was Lutherans School week. We celebrated our school in many fun ways during the week. We dressed patriotic, dressed like a rock star, had breakfast with our parents, had church members come in to read with us, and wore silly socks to remind us about all those in need of socks. The school staff and students thought we would show the homeless in our community the love of Jesus by meeting some of their daily needs. The students have been doing extra chores to raise money to buy things such as socks, snacks, wash clothes, tooth brushes and tooth paste, soap, brushes, band aides, water, sun screen, and a Bible. Our school and students are sharing the love of Christ in this community.

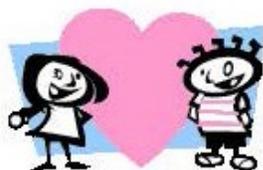
Step up for Students is now enrolling students for next school year. If you know of a student K-4th grade who would like to go to a school that not only teaches academics but also teaches Jesus, let them know about us. They can contact the church office, stop in, or call Pastor for more information.

Ephesians 4:2 "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."



Choir

Calling all voices! If you want to rejoice on Easter, come join the choir. Contact Collins Sita or come on Wednesdays at 6:00 pm and sing to your Risen King.



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY
FEBRUARY 2020

Bible Lessons

Chapel is on Mondays
at 4:00

2/3 Jesus Tells His Children to Come

Mark 10:13-16

2/10 Jesus Says to Show Mercy

LuK 10:25-37

2/17 God Provides for His Children

LuK 21:1-4

2/24 Jesus Came to Save Sinners

LuK 19:1-10



Dear Jesus, Thank You for pastors and teachers who tell me of Your love. I rejoice that my name is written in heaven.

Amen

President's Day

Closed February 17, 2020

Submitted by Wendy Horvath

Birthdays

Bailey N. 2/21

Ms. Paige 2/24

National Lutheran School's Week

Jan 27-31

Thank you for participating!

A HUGE Thank You!

Thank you to all the local businesses that helped with the Silent Auction. We are super excited to get new bicycles for the playground!



Spring Photos

Teddy Bear Portraits

March 23, 2020

Purchase photos same day from 3-5:30 pm

Valentine's Day Parties!



Please check with your Child's Teacher about any party plans for Valentine's Day.

Pancakes For Breakfast

All classes will have Pancakes for Breakfast to celebrate Valentine's Day on February 14, 2020



Celebrating the Super Bowl



Wear your favorite Football Jersey or tee on January 31, 2020 and we will be having pizza for lunch.

Looking for LOVE



Find these words

HUSBAND
JOY
KISS
LOVE
PAIR

CARING
CELEBRATION
FAMILY
FOREVER
HAPPY



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TRUST
UNION
VOWS

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School/Child Care Phone:
941-475-2631
email: redeemerfl@gmail.com

REDEEMER REPORTER

Published monthly for members, Associate Members and Visitors of Redeemer Lutheran Church, a member congregation of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

WORSHIP SERVICES:

Divine Service: 9:15 AM
Bible Class: 10:30 AM
Sunday School: 10:30 AM

The Redeemer Lutheran Church, School & Child Care Family are called into the service of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by His command (Matthew 28:18-20) to:

- ◆*Disciple all nations, that is, all people;*
- ◆*Baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit;*
- ◆*Proclaim the Gospel and teach His Word in its truth and purity; and*
- ◆*Never be ashamed of the Gospel—it is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16).*