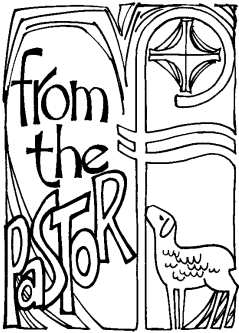




**Redeemer Lutheran Church of Leisure World and  
St. Theodore of Canterbury Episcopal Church**  
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***Message from the Pastor:***  
**From the Interim Pastor – August 2024**



*"And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20*

According to Saint Matthew, this is the last word Jesus spoke before he ascended into heaven 40 days after his resurrection. It is often called the Great Commission as Jesus was now sending his followers out into the world with five final instructions...

**Go** therefore

**Make disciples** throughout all the nations of the world

**Baptize** them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

**Teach** them to follow what I have taught you

**Remember** I am with you wherever you go until the end of time

For 2000 years, the Christian Church has endeavored to follow Jesus' commission in a variety of ways. This month's I wish to write about the ways that the Christian Church has addressed the command to "make disciples." Disciples are those who believe in Christ's saving grace, and share it with others, making them disciples, thus spreading the Good News to more and more. Not everyone who is part of Christ's Church is necessarily a disciple. We define those who follow Jesus and become part of his church in a variety of ways. Some are definitely modern day "disciples." Many of the people connected with Christ's Church are referred to in other ways, i.e., the "faithful," or "believers." Some congregations, especially those who are governed by the clergy and a board of directors refer to their people as "partners in ministry." Roman Catholics and Episcopalians often call their people "parishioners." Many denominations call them "congregants." Lutherans tend to refer to them as members and they often divide that category into several subdivisions. One is the "baptized members," made up of all those on the roster of the congregation who have been baptized. They also sometimes refer to some of their people as "confirmed members," meaning those who have affirmed their membership as young and older adults by affirmation of faith. Some congregations have yet another sub-category of

“voting members,” indicating who it is that may hold an office in the leadership of the congregation and those who are eligible to vote in congregational meetings. There is also the category of “associate members,” namely those who regularly participate and attend but have not formally joined the official membership of the congregation. Finally, some congregations also include a list of “congregational friends” who are connected in a variety of ways with the congregation and may or may not be regularly involved in weekly activities, participation, and support. Normally, the constitutions of a congregation will clearly define what it means to be a member or parishioner, who is able to vote and hold an office in the church, and how decisions are made. Episcopal congregations are typically governed by the Vestry, a group of elected lay members who work alongside rector (the priest or pastor in charge of the congregation). In the Lutheran Church, the highest governing authority is the baptized voting membership who meets periodically in Voters’ Assemblies to make the needed and necessary decisions for the congregation. They normally elect the members of the Congregational Council which typically meet once a month to carry on the day-to-day ministry of the congregation throughout the year.

We always invite people to consider becoming a member of the congregation. In so doing, these people are pledging themselves to regularly participate, commune frequently, support the congregation as they are able with volunteer service and financially as well, hold office if nominated and elected, and vote in congregational meetings which approve annual budgets, elect officers and board members, and make major decisions on behalf of the faith community.

We give thanks for all of the people involved in the life of Redeemer Lutheran and St. Theodore of Canterbury Episcopal churches. We truly believe that making disciples, baptizing, and teaching is our primary calling, as commissioned by our Lord Jesus Christ. At the same time, however, if anyone reading this article wishes to inquire about or pursue membership in the congregation, please speak with me or one of the Congregational Council members listed below.

I give thanks for all of you... friends, occasional guests and visitors, associate members, members, and parishioners of Redeemer and St. Theodore of Canterbury.

May God continue to bless your summer weeks and your health,

*+ Pastor Murray D. Finck*

The Rev Murray D. Finck, Bishop Emeritus

Church Council: Kay Pushman, Wendy Alfageme, Nancy Anderson, Phyllis Mackey, Doris Weinert, Sandy Langdale, Carmen Leslie, Betty Lucero, Sylvia Makus, Michael Vanvales