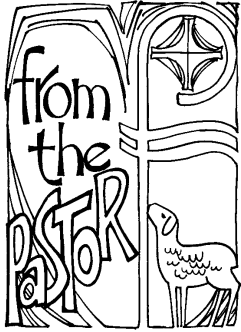




**Redeemer Lutheran Church of Leisure World and
St. Theodore of Canterbury Episcopal Church**
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May 2024



Message from the Pastor:

Dear Members and Friends of Redeemer and St. Theodore of Canterbury,
The Month of May Offers a Rich Variety of Worshipping Opportunities --
The four Sundays in May offer us a wide range of themes and inspirations,
along with three major Christian observances* in the liturgical calendar.
Here is an overview.

MAY 5 The Sixth Sunday of Easter

(White) The story of the first days of the Christian Church continues to be told in the Scripture reading as the disciples take the message of Jesus and the Gospel of God's love to both the Jewish people and the Gentiles in and around Jerusalem.

MAY 12 *Ascension Sunday

(White) The day of the Ascension of Jesus to heaven occurred 40 days (on a Thursday) after his Resurrection from the tomb. This year, Ascension Day is May 9th. It is one of the major observances in the Christian calendar. We will focus on that important event in Jesus' life and ministry on the following Sunday, May 12th. Matthew tells us of Jesus' "Great Commission" before his ascension in Matt. 28:16-20. Mark's Gospel has (in some Bibles) 12 additional verses at the end of chapter 16. Verse 19 tells of the Ascension. Luke tells the story twice, in Luke 24:50-53 and in Acts 1:1-11.

MAY 19 *Pentecost Sunday

(Red) The Day of Pentecost is 50 days after the Resurrection of Jesus. "Pentecost" is a word that refers to "fiftieth" (50th). People of the Jewish faith observed a Festival of Weeks fifty days after Passover, so they gathered in great numbers for this observance. It was during this first Pentecost Festival of Weeks after Jesus' Resurrection and Ascension, that the promised Holy Spirit of God came upon the disciples. We read about it in Acts 2. Pentecost is called "the Birthday of the Christian Church." We will hear about the thousands who heard the Gospel that day and believed, and how 3000 of those believers were then baptized. We will have a baptism that day also at Redeemer/St. Theodore.

MAY 26 *Sunday of the Holy Trinity

(White) The first Sunday following Pentecost Sunday is always designated by the Christian Church as a day to focus on the teaching and doctrine of the Holy Trinity and the mystery of our one Lord God being revealed to us in three distinct personages as Creator Father; as Redeemer, the Son of God; and as Giver of Faith, the Holy Spirit.

Reminder -- Pastor Scott Fielder will be the Guest Pastor presiding over the worship and preaching on May 5th. Thank you, Pastor Scott! I will be back from this “last-minute” unplanned trip to Nebraska on May 8th, rejoining the congregation on May 12th and May 19th for Ascension and Pentecost Sundays. Pastor Steve Beckham will return again as the Guest Pastor on May 26th for the Sunday of the Holy Trinity. Thank you again, Pastor Steve!

Wednesday 12:00 Noontime Bible Study on the Miracles of Jesus -- The class will resume again after a few weeks of hiatus. On May 15, we will study Chapter 2, *Stilling the Storm* - Mark 4:35-41. On May 22, we will discuss Chapter 3, *Casting Out the Demons* – Mark 5:1-20. Pastor David Andersen will lead the class on May 29 as the group studies Chapter 4, *Feeding the 5000* – John 6:1-15.

I have been thinking and praying (a lot) about the Holy Land. The conflict there has become a worldwide tragedy. I am thinking we may wish to talk about it, and pray together about it, and continue to cry out for peace.

I have been to the Middle East quite a few times over the years, having served on an ELCA team that championed peaceful resolutions for the ongoing tensions in the Middle East. For a number of years, I chaired that team. I traveled to Palestine, Israel, and Jordan several times with our ELCA Presiding Bishop and other times with colleagues from the ELCA Conference of Bishops. I was privileged to go there with a US Congresswoman, and on that journey we meet with ambassadors, top leaders of both the Israeli government and with the Palestinian Liberation Organization in the West Bank, the Jewish mayor of Jerusalem and the Palestinian mayor of Bethlehem. The Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Holy Land and Jordan and I became good friends, and I have been an advocate for the ongoing support of Augusta Victoria Hospital, sitting on the top of the Mount of Olives, which is operated by the Lutheran World Federation. I have been thinking that with all the news about the latest tragedies in the Holy Land since October 7, 2023 and how it has spilled over into the rest of world, including on our university campuses here in the US, that perhaps we, as a people of faith, should set aside some time and talk together about all that is happening around this most challenging time in world history. Perhaps one day in May we could sit together for a couple hours to better understand the background, the past and the present, and the issues that have led up to this devastating time in the lands that are so important for three of the world’s major religious groups. And then we could pray together for a lasting peace.

Again...Thank you! Thank you for remembering my birthday and the others of us who observed our annual milestones in April. It was wonderful as you celebrated with Sharon and me on April 14 after the service. You warmed my heart! Thank you and God bless you!

As you are able to join us for worship, please invite a neighbor or friend to come with you. I pray your May will be filled with joy!

To God alone be the glory,

+Murray D. Finck

The Rev. Murray D. Finck, Bishop Emeritus