REDEEMER REPORTER

REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH & CHILD CARE - JANUARY 2014

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS INVADES CHOICE®

This Newsletter contains an exhaustive report concerning the history and events leading up to the changes taking place within Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. This article was not written to offend anyone but to lovingly guide members of the church away from potential or eminent spiritual danger.

Many LCMS congregations, schools, child care centers, social ministries, and individuals have benefited for years from the monetary gifts distributed by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans through matching funds and through Thrivent Choice®. There is no arguing about that.

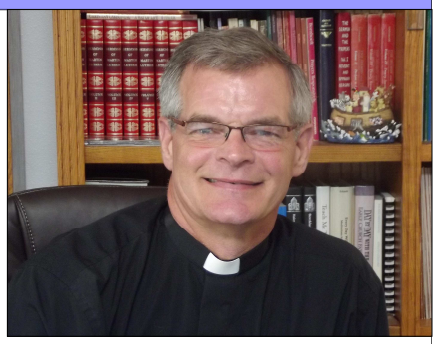
However, before there was Thrivent Financial, there was Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) and there was also Lutheran Brotherhood (LB).

In the early 20th century, two grassroots Lutheran groups; German Lutherans in Appleton, WI and Norwegian Lutherans in Minneapolis, MN were concerned about the security and well-being of their fellow Lutherans. Each group started a fraternal benefit society that would help Lutherans protect their families with life insurance.

The German Lutherans formed AAL in Appleton, Wisconsin in 1902. LB was formed in 1917 in Minnesota as a result of the merger convention of the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America.

The AAL German Lutherans were primarily members of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), while the LB Norwegian Lutherans were members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC) which evolved and eventually merged with other Lutheran Church bodies in 1988 and formed the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

In June 2001, after careful consideration of how combining AAL and LB would benefit members, the two organizations agreed to merge. Following the merger, a new operating name was approved by members: Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.



As a result of the merger, many concerned LCMS members thought it was only a matter of time when Thrivent Financial would head down a very slippery slope causing the consciences of God-fearing, Jesus-believing, Bible-reading Lutherans to reconsider how their investment dollars might possibly be used to advocate ungodly agendas directly or indirectly.

The event which caused the greatest concern, even among members of the ELCA, occurred at the Church-wide Assembly of the ELCA in August of 2009, when they, rejecting the prohibitions of God's Word, recognized "life-long monogamous same-gender relationships" and allowed non-celibate homosexual ministers to serve as pastors.

Many LCMS members sensed unbiblical changes would eventually take place with Thrivent because of the influence that 4.8 million ELCA members would have over 2.5 LCMS members. Concerns centered on how and where investment funds would be distributed and how they would support ungodly programs and organizations.

In 2010 Thrivent Financial for Lutherans launched a new charitable grant program called Thrivent Choice®. This program allowed members to choose or request where Thrivent Financial would distribute part of its charitable funds each year. Today, many Thrivent members are choosing a specific organization or ministry where their Choice dollars are financially supporting an organization.

Last month I was alerted to the presence of an entry in the Thrivent Choice® database. The entry was for Planned Parenthood of Minnesota, North Dakota, & South Dakota. Planned Parenthood is the leading

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Pastor	**Rev. James Kress**
Seasonal Pastor	**Rev. Mark Steinke**
LHM Ambassador	**Rev. Earl Schmidt**
Child Care Director	**Wendy Horvath**
Office Secretary	**Patty Lodge**
Organists	**Bill Bowers** **Lanette Schmidt**
Choir Director	**Collins Sita**
Newsletter Editor	

OFFICERS

President	**Rich Kueker**
Vice President	**Brian Abel**
Treasurer	**Judy Murphy**
Secretary	**Betty Clemens**

BOARDS

Head Elder	**Tim Byrne**
Assimilation	**Deb Kueker**
Property Mgmt	**Todd Armstrong**
Christian Ed.	**Pam Replinger**
Human Care	**Carol Carlos**
Outreach	
School Board	**Bill Bowers**
Stewardship	
Youth	
Financial Secretary	**Karen Kirkland**

CLUBS/GUILDS

Ladies Guild	**Sally Zierdt**
Men's Group	**Bob Mortenson**

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

As we look forward to the new year, we must also review the past one. I would like to thank all the officers, chairpersons, and all the committee members for their hard work and dedication to The Lord's congregation at Redeemer. We could not succeed without your involvement. Yet, we have much to do in the future. Positions to be filled, committees that need help, etc. Please prayerfully consider the stewardship of your time.

Stewardship must also include returning a portion of the blessings God has given us. Financially, we finished just short of our budgeted income for 2013. An increase of 5% from each of us would allow us to reach our goal. If one has been able to donate up to $20/week, can 1 extra dollar be found? One cup of coffee per week for most of us!

Please consider whatever your circumstances allow. The Lord has, does, and will provide in the future.

May the Lord bless your New Year in every way (and keep the flu bug away; Deb and I remember last January all too well). The future of Redeemer can be bright; it is up to us with the Lord's help.

Rich

The deadline for the February Newsletter is January 19th
Please have all your submissions sent to redeemerfl@verizon.net OR drop it off at the church office to Patty by the time indicated above. Thank You!

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abortion provider in the United States, having performed around 327,000 abortions in 2012 alone.

Leadership of the LCMS without delay issued the following response on December 19th.

> The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) is deeply concerned by the news that Thrivent Financial has recognized Planned Parenthood of Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota as a potential recipient of funding through its Thrivent Choice Dollars grant program. The LCMS always has been, and will continue to be, clear and faithful in its proclamation of the sanctity of all human life from conception until natural death. We are currently in conversation with Thrivent Financial and pray for a God-pleasing resolution to this matter so that the pro-life witness of individual Lutherans and the LCMS will not be compromised.
>
> Maggie Karner, Director
> LCMS Life and Health Ministries
>
> Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, President
> The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Also appearing on the same day was an LCMS Reporter article (found in the following link: http://blogs.lcms.org/2013/thrivent-planned-parenthood). I've included below one of many comments appearing after the article:

> I've held AAL life insurance for over 60 years. It's not much, and I'm sure Thrivent won't miss a trick if I pull it.
>
> For some time, I have been concerned about the changes taking place in the organization and its structure. What we have witnessed here is what MBAs would label long-range planning. Blending with Lutheran Brotherhood was what I call dipping one's toe in the water. Changing the name to Thrivent seemed a deliberate step away from the distinguished and distinguishable label of Lutheran. The changeover to a pan-Christian fraternal organization was the final slap of the trowel on Thrivent's new foundation, one I have no wish to be identified with or to support. We ceased donating through Thrivent some time ago, not willing to put our tithes toward organizations and causes that do not share our beliefs and adherence to Scripture.
>
> Planned Parenthood is the final nail in the coffin. This could NOT have been done in ignorance. Rather it demonstrates a deliberate challenge to the principles LCMS has followed through its history. The mission and goals of the old AAL are long gone, and we ought not to acquiesce to this maneuver one iota. Thanks, President Harrison for standing up to this issue. I hope Missouri continues to stand tall. – Charlotte Gebauer Koelling

With such an uprising concern over where and how Thrivent Choice® dollars are potentially used, Thrivent issued this response:

> Background: This is Thrivent Financial's statement regarding a recent issue related to the addition of a Planned Parenthood affiliate to the catalog of eligible Thrivent Choice organizations. The statement outlines our position on this issue and describes the actions of our members and organization.
>
> Thrivent Financial is a membership organization of Christians with more than two million members in more than 1,300 local chapters nationwide. While our membership holds diverse points of view on faith and social issues, we share a common purpose to be wise with money and live generously.
>
> We listen to concerns from all of our members, and we are listening now.
>
> As a grassroots organization, we are committed to honoring the desire of our members and local chapters to choose and support the non-profit organizations that are meaningful to them. We recognize that the eligibility of a Planned Parenthood affiliate, approved by one of our local chapters, has been controversial.
>
> After input, discussion and a review of the concerns from Thrivent members, *the leadership of this local chapter voted Thursday to remove it from the Thrivent Choice program effective immediately*. Given the deeply held views on this issue across our membership, we also are taking action to address the concerns of our membership. *These steps include temporarily suspending all* ***pro-choice and pro-life*** *organizations from the Thrivent*

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Choice program, placing a temporary hold on the addition and removal of nonprofit organizations from the program, and conducting a comprehensive program review.

The Thrivent Choice program is highly valued by our members. More than 270,000 members have used it to direct some $47 million – 91% of it to Christian congregations, schools, camps/outdoor ministries, and social ministries. We will seek input from our members, chapter leaders and others in the communities we serve with the goal of designing and delivering a program that continues to support the priorities of our members and our common purpose.

Thrivent members, if you would like to share your feedback, you may reach the Thrivent Choice® team using the Contact Form on this page. You may also write to:

Thrivent Choice Program
4321 N Ballard Road
Appleton, WI 54919

Although I was delighted to see Thrivent remove Planned Parenthood from the Thrivent Choice® program, I was deeply saddened to hear that all pro-life organizations were suspended from receiving Choice dollars from Thrivent members. Was this a deliberate and intentional maneuver toward political correctness? In my humble opinion, I have no doubt!

What I was able to ascertain is that there are more than 50 pro-life organizations that were receiving Thrivent member Choice® dollars. These pro-life organizations are pregnancy care or advocacy centers, places where any pregnant woman, young, old, or confused can receive professionally trained guidance so that the mother can make a wise decision for the benefit and life of her unborn baby. Moreover, the mother is rescued from committing a horrible sin, freed from shame and regret through the knowledge of a loving Savior who loves her and her unborn baby with and everlasting love no matter what the circumstances were leading to her pregnancy.

What also troubles me about the Thrivent statement is that **only** 91% of the $47 million Choice® dollars were distributed to Christian congregations, schools, camps and outdoor ministries, as well as social ministries. I don't know why 100% of the Choice® dollars weren't distributed to the same ministries? I can only speculate and conclude that 9% of the $47 million (which is a mere $4.23 million), went to support a non-Christian organization, like the pro-choice organization Planned Parenthood.

Found on their website, Thrivent states they are "a faith-based, not-for-profit membership organization nearly 2.5 million members strong." Faith-based! Certainly not the historic Christian faith revealed in the New Testament.

And if that weren't enough to spin your head, I continued to do a little more investigating and reading and found the following organization listed in the database of Thrivent Choice® as a social ministry organization.

Lutherans Concerned North America Inc
1669 Arcade St Ste 2
Saint Paul, MN 55106
http://www.reconcilingworks.org
Type: Social Ministry Organization

Information from the Organization

ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation (Lutherans Concerned/North America) advocates for the full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Lutherans in all aspects of the life of their Church and congregations. We provide a place of comfort and safety. We reach out to teach that Christ's message, the Gospel, is for everyone equally. We call for the blessing of committed and covenanted same-gender relationships, and for the ordination of those called to minister.

Directing Thrivent Choice Dollars® and participating in Voting Events are subject to the Terms and Conditions of the Thrivent Choice® program and if you direct any Thrivent Choice Dollars or participate in any Voting Events this means that you agree to the Terms and Conditions.

And in viewing the Terms and Conditions, I also discovered this:

By participating in Thrivent Choice®, I am agreeing that I have read and agree to the following Thrivent Choice Terms and Conditions:

… Thrivent may change, limit, modify, cancel or

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revoke Thrivent Choice and/or Terms and Conditions and/or other Program Rules at any time and for any reason, with or without notice, and I agree to any such changes or I will opt out of the program …

… While these funds are restricted to be used exclusively to support religious, charitable, and/or educational purposes of recipient organizations, Thrivent Financial and its chapters are not responsible for how recipient organizations use funds donated to them under Thrivent Choice …

… Thrivent Financial retains total discretion as to whether or how all Choice Dollars are distributed. Any "direction" that I provide to Thrivent to designate recipients of Choice Dollars is a request and recommendation from me suggesting a recipient of Choice Dollars funding which Thrivent is under no legal obligation to approve or follow …

… Thrivent Financial may terminate my eligibility to participate in Choice Dollars and/or may cancel or revoke all or any portion of Thrivent Choice Dollars® designated as subject to my direction at any time and for any reason, with or without notice …

I find these terms and conditions to be quite dubious and distrustful. Terms and conditions like these may be the usual practice for big business, but they are not acceptable for a "faith-based" organization.

Our suspicion and concern more than three years ago, caused Lisa and me to withdraw our accounts from Thrivent. This was not an easy decision to make at the time because we put trust in the people representing Thrivent, but our consciences were bound, we had to act.

It is very unfortunate Thrivent Financial is and has been making decisions that are contrary to the teaching of Holy Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions.

On the basis of God's Word and evidenced by 2000 years of Christian teaching, we believe that murder, fornication, adultery, and homosexual activity are all sin before God (Matthew 15:19; James 2:11; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10), sins which need to be confessed as such, so that they can be forgiven, as the Scripture says, "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Some may dismiss our position as Biblicism or legalism. Yet the Word of God remains true (John 17:17). In the wider context of this verse we can see how these issues DO affect the Gospel:

"This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," (1 John 1:5-2:2).

This is the only way any of us are able stand before God. We claim nothing of our own, but can only plead the merits of Jesus Christ. All else is darkness and leads away from the truth, for if we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us. Only Jesus can save us, for only Jesus is the sacrifice that bears in our place the full wrath of God on account of our sin.

This is why we cannot call good what God has called sin. Accepting the murder of the unborn or homosexual activity as good promotes a false security about behavior God has forbidden and from which He longs to redeem us. It leads to self-justification rather than that justification God has promised all who trust His forgiving mercy through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

This is not a happy situation, but a difficult one. We humbly recognize that we, in the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod have many faults, many of which are often more visible to those outside than to us inside. Each of us struggles with sin each and every day. No one is

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alone, no matter the sin you struggle with.

But we are also bound to the Word of God. We pray that the Lord would enable us to love every sinner enough to be honest with them, speaking the truth in love, about the Word of God regarding both repentance and forgiveness. We pray that by His Spirit we thirst and hunger for righteousness in His Word and joyfully keep the Gospel of forgiveness central to our life and practice.

We pray for our brothers and sisters at Thrivent Financial, and for all of us, that the Lord would preserve us and that we may both humbly seek and boldly confess Christ and His Word before the world. Jesus lovingly cautions us saying, "No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money" (Luke 16:13).

In His Service,
Pastor Kress

LHM (LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES) UPDATE

A NEW CENTER OPENS IN MEXICO:

It's a bold step by Lutheran Hour Ministry (LHM). Around the world, the largest migration is happening in human history, i.e. every 60 days eight million people move to the cities of the world. That adds up to one new "Bangkok" every two months. LHM is responding by opening or reopening outreach centers in some of the world's largest cities. The newest ministry center is in Mexico.

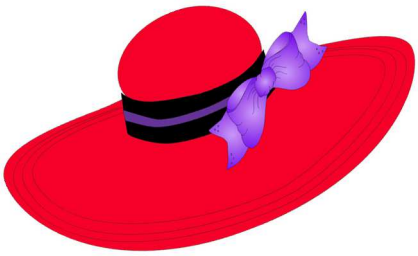
"A new challenge is in place for us," says Rev. Nilo Figur, regional director for Latin America. "Mexico City is one of the biggest cities in the world, with a combined metropolitan area population of more than 21 million people -- and it's alive, moving, and still growing city."

Redeemer will celebrate LHM Sunday on Feb. 2nd. Let us support LHM as one of our critical Gospel Outreach arms throughout the world.

Rev. Earl Schmidt, Redeemer's LHM Ambassador

LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES
www.lhm.org

REDEEMER RED HATS



The Redeemer Red Hats next lunch will be held on
Thursday, January 28th
at Stefano's Restaurant,
421 S. Indiana Ave., Englewood at 11:30 AM. Please sigh up on the sheet on the visitor's desk in the Narthex.

FROM THE TREASURER'S DESK

As of January 1 Through December 31, 2013

Income	*Expense*
$233,942.88	*$250,234.58*

PROPERTY APPRECIATION DAY

Please join us for our monthly "Property Appreciation" Day on the second Saturday of the month, January 11th!!! We begin at 8 AM. Join us in keeping our buildings and properties beautiful. There's a little something to do for anyone willing to help … THANK YOU! - *Todd Armstrong, Property Management*

HUMAN CARE

Our blood drive on December 1 received 12 units of blood with 4 people being turned away for various reasons. That means you saved 36 patients lives. The blood is transfused within 48 - 72 hours of you giving. The turnaround is fast and constant. Keep it coming Redeemer. The next blood drive is Feb. 2, 2014, 8:30am to 1:00pm.

The Relay For Life movement is an event that gives everyone a chance to fight cancer and help save lives. Our Relay For Life event is April 5, 2014 beginning at 4:00 PM Saturday and ending 6:00 AM Sunday. Because cancer never sleeps, each team is asked to have a representative on the track at all times. The event will be held at Lemon Bay High School track. We will have projects every month to raise money for cancer. You might ask "What does my dollar do"?

- Funds groundbreaking research and new clinical trials.
- Helps cancer patients to and from treatments.
- Trains volunteers to visit patients with newly diagnosed breast cancer.
- Covers the cost of providing information to those facing cancer.
- Provides free lodging for caregivers in the American Cancer Society Hope Lodges nationwide.
- Helps guide patients through their cancer journey by talking with a survivor.

Jesus said, "Take care of My Sheep." – John 21:16

THANK YOU

A huge thank you to the members of the congregation who were Tellers for the Board of Finance in 2013. You are a very important part of the operation in the Finance office. The generosity of your time and talent is greatly appreciated. I look forward to working with you again in 2013. God bless you all.

Submitted by Karen Kirkland, Board of Finance

USHERS

To all who serve as ushers. You are a very important part of Redeemer Lutheran Church Family. Your friendly smile, warm greeting and extended handshake make everyone feel welcome. Volunteering your time and talent is GOD's blessing to Redeemer Lutheran Church.

Thank you.

Tom Kirkland, Dale & Pat Whipple

REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES - November 11, 2012

PRESENT: Pastor Kress, Rich Kueker, Brian Abel, Tim Byrne, Judy Murphy, Karen Kirkland, Carol Carlos, Pam Replinger, Bill Bowers, and Betty Clemens.
The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by President Rich Kueker.
Pastor Kress opened the meeting with prayer.

MINUTES of the October 14, 2013 meeting were presented. PAM MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED. BILL SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

CALENDAR for December was presented and the following changes were made: Human Care on Dec. 4th is at 10:00 instead of l0:30; Ladies Guild/LWML Christmas Party on Friday the 6th at 12:00 instead of the 11th ; Vision Path will meet at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, the l0th; Stephen Ministry will not meet on Thursday the 12th.

REPORTS

PASTOR: Report attached.

PRESIDENT: No Report.

VICE PRESIDENT: No Report.
Brian said the contract with Pitney Bowes for the stamp machine will be renewed.

TREASURER: Report Attached.

BOARD OF ELDERS: Report attached. Tim proposed an Amendment to consider. KAREN MADE A MOTION TO CHANGE THE CURRENT RESOLUTION FROM CIRCUIT COUNSELOR TO CIRCUIT VISITOR. PAM SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED. Tim will bring this to the Voter's Meeting.

FINANCE: No Report.

HUMAN CARE BOARD: Report attached.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT: No Report.

ASSIMILATION: No Report.

COMMUNITY & PARISH FELLOWSHIP: No Report.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: No Report.

SCHOOL BOARD: No Report.

VISION PATH DEVELOPMENT TEAM: No Report. Bud is working hard with his team. The desire is not to go after one thing, but see all the needs of the congregation. This cannot be accomplished at once. We are looking at what is the priority. We can then proceed to present this to the Voter's Assembly if necessary.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

2014 BUDGET:

* Regarding the Child Care Budget, Bill is looking to reduce expenses due to lower income. BILL MADE A MOTION THAT THE COUNCIL RECOMMEND TO THE ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE TO RE-AMORITIZE THE BALANCE ON THE CHILD CARE LOAN FOR A 60 MONTH PERIOD. TIM SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

* A discussion was held on the $600 per month for gas for the vans. This includes insurance, license, fuel and maintenance. BRIAN MADE A MOTION TO ONLY CHARGE CHILD CARE FOR ACTUAL FUEL EXPENSES ON A MONTHLY BASIS. TIM MADE A MOTION TO AMEND THE MOTION TO READ $2,000 WILL BE TAKEN OFF THE CHURCH BUDGET MAINTENANCE PORTION WHICH WILL REDUCE THE CHILD CARE ANNUAL EXPENSES FOR GAS BY $2,000. BILL SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

Wind and Hail Insurance: Child Care pays $4,800 toward this insurance to LCEF Fund. The Church pays $13,764 for a total of $18,564. This will be reviewed.

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION MADE BY TIM: RESOLVED, THAT REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH, AUTHORIZES AND ESTABLISHES THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUAL'S HOUSING ALLOWANCE FOR THE YEAR 2014:

REV. JAMES KRESS $45,240; REV. MARK STEINKE $2,500. THE HOUSING

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REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL cont.

ALLOWANCE WILL BE PAID FROM JANUARY 1, 2014 TO DECEMBER 31, 2014. PAM SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

Tim spoke of the 3rd Annual Golf Scramble Angel Fund. As head of this event, he said that he will need a lot of volunteers, preparing and serving a meal, registering and obtaining donations from businesses. Sign-up sheets will be coming soon. He also asked Council's approval to serve wine and beer at this event. There were no objections.

Candidates for 2014 offices was tabled until the next meeting.

JUDY MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN. KAREN SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 with a prayer given by Pastor Kress and the singing the Doxology.

Respectfully Submitted,
Betty Clemens, Cong. Sec.

LUTHERAN CHURCH EXTENSION FUND (LCEF)

New Year's Resolutions-It's that time of year again! While many of our resolutions revolve around our desire for self-improvement, (lose weight, exercise, etc.), some involve our financial stability like saving more for retirement or keeping a tighter rein on our budget. How about a resolution to increase ministry opportunities within the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod? Opening an account with Lutheran Church Extension Fund will start you on the road to keeping that resolution.

LCEF has many investment choices available to choose from and offer comparable interest rates to local financial institutions. Who uses the money that you invest? LCMS congregations and church workers have access to the money for loans to help finance ministry growth and needs. To me, that's a win-win situation.

With the recent news that Thrivent has opened membership to all Christians (who may or may not have beliefs that coincide with mine) and that Planned Parenthood is an organization that qualifies for Thrivent Choice Dollars, we have to consider who benefits from our investment dollars. I know that the money that we have in our LCEF Family Emergency Steward Accounts will be used for purposes that will further the mission and ministry of my church and is also available to help church workers.

Start your New Year's Resolution on the right path Open an LCEF account today! If you need more information, please stop by the table in the narthex or see me, your LCEF representative.

Respectfully submitted,
Laurie Steinke

SINGLES LUNCHEON

Our Singles will be having lunch on Tuesday the 14th of January at "Beyond the Sea" at 11:30 AM. Now that all the busy season is over, start the New Year off with the activities of 2014.

We look forward to having all singles, male and female, from Redeemer in attendance. A sign up sheet is in the Narthex, please sign up no later than January 12th.

Submitted by Lessie Kirch

MEN'S BREAKFAST

The Men will again be gathering for their monthly breakfast. We will meet the 2nd Monday of each month at Country Hound Café at 7 AM. Come and join us for breakfast and fellowship. All men are welcome to join us.
For more information please contact Charles Malecki (941) 697-0976.

STEWARDSHIP

It's a new year. And with a new year comes the time where we take stock of the previous year and change what needs to be changed, improved or done away with altogether. Let's consider then our stewardship of the things that God, out of His divine goodness and mercy, has given to us.

St. Paul writes: "The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, 'He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.' He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for all your generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God" (2 Corinthians 9:6–15).

St. Paul tells us that the Lord of all will both supply and increase what you need to give to the church for its work in and for the world. He tells us that this work that God is doing in us will enrich and bless us in every way and through this it will produce thanksgiving to God. With this in mind, here is some practical advice to help you take stock of your giving of years past, which will help you to change what needs to be changed, improved or forgotten with altogether.

First, attend the Divine Service to receive God's gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation. If you've not been faithful in attending worship to hear the preaching of God's Word, to receive forgiveness, and feast of the rich food of our Lord's body and blood for the eternal benefit of your body and soul, then repent and come to receive the gifts God freely gives. God doesn't want your money. He wants you—all of you (Matthew 22:20–22).

Second, pray for the Lord's help. Your right as a Christian is to speak with your Father, the King of all creation, freely through His Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Go to the throne of grace and ask for strength and wisdom to follow His bidding faithfully (John 15:1–16).

Third, consider what the Church is and what the Church does. The Church is a mercy place. It inhales the mercy of the Father by the death, resurrection, and ascension of His Son through the preaching of the Gospel and the Sacraments. It exhales this mercy in love toward the neighbor. You are a member of the Church, of God's family. Thus, you are not only a recipient of God's mercy, but a bearer of that mercy for the life of the world. You spread that mercy in showing mercy through the generous giving of your income to support the work of the Church in and for the world, as the Israelites did in the Old Testament (Leviticus 27:1–34).

Fourth, take stock of your current giving in light of the New Testament's teaching on supporting the work of the Church. Are you giving of your first fruits, taking it out of your paycheck first, or does God get what's left over? Are you giving voluntarily and cheerfully? Are you giving proportionally and generously? The Old Testament required a tithe, ten percent. The New Testament gives freedom to be generous, to give more for the Church's work. Are you relying on God's promise to provide and increase what you need to do His work? If your answer is no to any of these, repent. If God gave you His only Son, will He not provide for you all things, even physical things? Trust Him, His Word, and heed it.

Fifth, commit for the year a generous proportion of your income, God's gift to you for this body and life. You are children of the New Covenant. You are free to give more because you have been given more. There is no limit, not with the grace of God or the freedom you have to give.

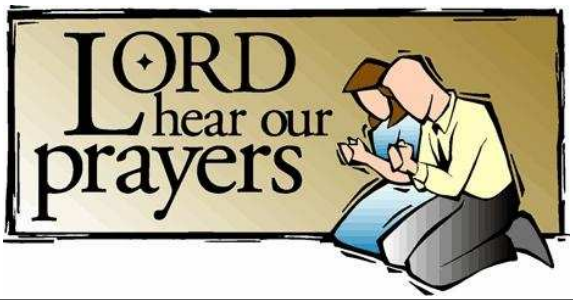
The Board of Stewardship

PRAYERS

***SHUT-INS*:** Marjorie Boliere, Evelyn Etheridge, Erv Maki, Helen Perry, and Ruth Sutley.

***HEALING*:** Erna Able, Delores Altmann, Kristine Baltimore, Carl & Betty Bertka, Bob Boliere, Melissa Brew, Elma Cancellieri, Fred Fernald, Pat Finkenbine, Arlene Harden, Bernice Heppner, Erwin Janke, Cindy Johnson, Diane McGrath, Sandy McGrath, Marlene Mossner, Stacy Neef, Olga Nagel, Leah Norton, Braxton Payne, Carolyn Plesner, Sue Poyer, Ron Ratzlaff, Michael Sanders, Duwayne Schoeneck, Sandy Sita, Vern Speer, Clarence Sturzenbecker, Marie Talley, Fred Toth, Lois Webster, Pat Whipple, Arlene Wiley, Ronald Woller

***FRIENDS & RELATIVES*:** Anthony Abreu, Linny Aspery, Jean Bajner, Gioconda Barlow, Rita Deatty, Shirley Bloom, Grace Blum, Dennis Burchell, Georgia Bush, John Burtcher, Jack & Cathy Carlos, Diana Carr, Debbie Carr, Diane Carr, Esther Clapham, Bobbett Clark, Martin Cressman, Renee Dempsey, Irene DiTommaso, James Dodge, Barb Dumeah, Chuck & Barbara Ebert, Maggie Edberg, Joel Fredette, Manual Galan, Glenn Galway, Nancy Gleis, Debbie Harrison, John Haupt, Larry Headun, Claudette Hendershot, Joel Heppner, Walter Heppner, Glory Herget, Robin Hincman, David Hirtle, Larry Hladun, Tom & Linda Holt, John Hunter, Linda Hunter, Stanley & Lynne Jablonski, Carl Jennejahn, Heather Johnson, Rachel Kagay, John Kearns, Jackie Klinger, Mary Krueger, Jim Lane, John Lewis, Ray Likowski, Denise Line, Don Luffingwell, Sean Maki, Joe Manson, Pete Mogg, Linda Mohr, Mike Morrissey, Kaye Gene Mortenson, Rev. Dana Narring, Noreen Oliver, Charles Pentecost Jr., Mary Raines, Elaine Reebe, Tucker Roberts, Ryan Sheahan, Don Shepherd, Nancy Sly, Debbie Speer Smith, Virginia Stanley, Sarah Sturzenbecker, The Family & Friends of Mary Temple, Charles Tolley, Samantha Jo Ann Toth, George Vespa, Pat Vovcsko, Steven Walker, Helen Weishaar, Gordan Winkel, Reece Withers, Angel Zavala.



***MILITARY PERSONNEL*:** Mark Baranowsky, Michael Broughton, Brian Jackson, Brett Keck, David MacLeod, Michael Monson, 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.

ALTAR GUILD - FLOWERS

Sign your name next to your chosen date and the reason for placement: Birthday, Anniversary, In Memory Of, To the Glory of God, etc. You may include the $25.00 payment in your offering envelope. Call the office with any special wording for the Bulletin listing. You may take the flowers home or leave them for pastor to take to a shut-in.

Submitted by Carol Sheahan

THURSDAY SENIOR FELLOWSHIP

There is still room for some more game players. We play something for everyone: Pinochle, Doninos, Phase 10, Skip Bo, or Hand & Foot. If you do not know how to play, we will teach you. They are all pretty simple and it doesn't take long to learn. We do have a good time and enjoy each others company. It is good to get out of the house, especially if you live alone and do not have any one to play cards, etc. We have several who come who do not belong to our church and all are welcome. We play from 10:00 until Noon, after which we have lunch. Everyone brings a bag lunch unless specified. Tea, coffee, and dessert are furnished. Give us a try.

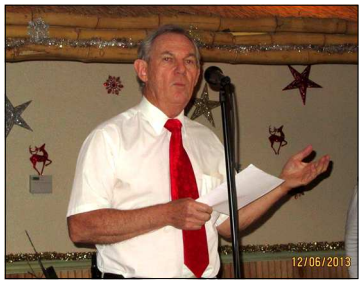
Submitted by Lessie Kirch

LADIES GUILD/LWML

The ladies guild celebrated Christmas with a lunch on the 6th of December at "Beyond the Sea" with 40 present. Everyone seem to enjoy this along with the entertainment provided by several people, which were, our own, Bill Bowers, Lanette Schmidt, Sammy Jollay, Ed Doenges and Pastor Schmidt. We all enjoyed the singing of Kate Keys (*pictured here*), a 16 year old Lemon Bay High School student. Kate performs every Tuesday from 6-8 PM at the Restaurant. It would be a real treat to stop in to hear Kate.

Our next Ladies Guild/LWML meeting will be held January 8th. Jean Roehrs, Sarasota Zone LWML President will be our guest speaker. Jean was our delegate to the National LWML convention, held in Pittsburg, last June 2013. Come and hear about the new Mission Grant's and all the exciting and inspirational days that Jean experienced in Pittsburg. After all the busy holidays, we hope to see many ladies starting the year off right by attending our January meeting. All new members of the congregation and friends are invited to attend. We have refreshments at 12:30 PM followed by our meeting at 1:00 PM. See you all there.

Submitted by Lessie Kirch, VP



MORE LWML NEWS

ALL Redeemer members and guests can drop coins and bills and checks into the large MITE BOX on Sunday, January 5th which will help fund the grant to the Carpenter's Hands in St. Petersburg which is a group of youth who spruce up homes of the elderly or disabled. This is one grant of the National biennium goal of $1,830,000 which will be used to fund eighteen grants. I am sure that the women, who first met in Chicago at the founding convention 72 yrs. ago could not have realized the impact their decisions would make into the future lives of many of the grant recipients throughout the world. THANK YOU for your support of sharing the Gospel!

Submitted by Vicky Davis

REDEEMER ANNUAL YARD SALE

It's that time again! Redeemer's Annual Yard Sale!! Friday, January 24th from 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM and Saturday, January 25th from 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM.

NEEDED

CLEAN, USEABLE, SALEABLE ITEMS

Bicycles, books, clothing, crafts, curtains, decorations, dishes, glassware, fruit, furniture, games, household items, jewelry, linens, plants, tools, toys, towels, small appliances, etc.

(Please, no computers, printers, or major appliances)

DROP OFF DAYS: Wednesday and Thursday, January 22 & 23.

Submitted by Sybil Grahl

STEPHEN MINSITRY

We are all ambassadors of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). Listen to God's call and become a special ambassador, bringing the love and presence of Christ to those who are hurting and in need of care and support as they go through hard times. Become a Stephen Minister. Classes will be starting this January for those interested in learning how to be a Stephen Minister. Please contact Carol Carlos 941-255-3354 or Carol Haupt 941-460-8830 for further information.

NEW UNIFORMS FOR USHERS?

NOT REALLY!

This picture was taken on Christmas Day when the ushers arrived for service sporting a very festive wardrobe. The merry ushers are from left to right: Steve & Lee Procuk, Judy Murphy, and Patty Lodge.

CLASSIFIEDS

Sales—Rentals	Pineapple Gulf Properties—Glenda McDorman, Owner/Broker (Lessie Kirch's Daughter),350 S. Indiana Road Englewood, FL 34223. Office: 941-473-0300, Cell: 941-330-7922.
Cleaning Services	Free estimates! Please contact Sheila Murphy at 941-473-1747.
Lawn Care	Call Todd Armstrong at 941-961-7584 for your lawn care needs.
Construction	Call Rob Long! A.C.S., Inc. - Licensed General Contractor - Anything from full remodels, full lanai's, window and door installation and ALL phases of construction. State certified licensed and insured. Please call for a free estimate at 941-475-5008 or 941-232-6606!
Real Estate	SURF & SAND REALTY - Pat Whipple, Realtor 2350 N. Beach Road, Unit 3B, Englewood, 34223. I'd love to help you find your perfect home or sell it, because I really care. Please contact me at 941-882-2725 or 941-474-7755!
For Sale	Best offer over $30, 1/2 the money will go towards the church rummage sale: 50 + LP records, excellent condition. Many collectables! Call Sammy Jollay. You can leave a message at 941-697-5905

LOST AND FOUND

If anyone is missing any items, namely eyeglasses, gloves, umbrellas, etc., please check the Lost & Found box located in the narthex.

GREETERS

Jan. 5th:	**8:00 AM – Marie Talley** **10:30 AM – Lessie Kirch**
Jan. 12th:	**8:00 AM – Betty Clemens** **10:30 AM – Lessie Kirch**
Jan. 19th:	**8:00 AM – Clare Kieselburg** **10:30 AM – Marti Winterheimer & Linda Rogers**
Jan. 26th:	**8:00 AM – Russ & Carol Spooner** **10:30 AM – Eileen Zwick**

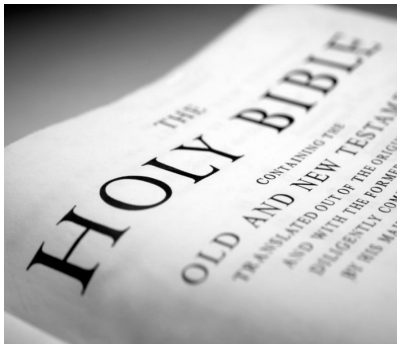
Submitted by Assimilation

COFFEE HOUR

Jan. 5th:	**Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF)**
Jan. 12th:	**Angie Ziegler & Melissa Brew**
Jan. 19th:	**Marion Buie & Dottie LaMere**
Jan. 26th:	**Helen Plank & Donna Wolf**

Submitted by Lisa Kress

TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS



Tuesday morning Bible Class at 10:00 AM continues with another exciting topic of study: **What Does God Say About . . .?** An ellipsis (three dots) is intentionally placed at the end of the question to indicate that we will examine what God's Word says concerning almost any concern (question) you may have. Some of the questions we will consider at the onset will be what God says about same-sex marriage, the sanctity of life, the end times, Bible prophecy, etc. Certainly these are some 'hot topics' but just as the average Lutheran layman today may not know any Latin, he probably knows what the phrase 'sola Scriptura' (Scripture alone) means. It means that we Lutherans base our theology, our teaching, the doctrines of the church solely on the Scriptures of God and nothing else, not tradition, not human speculation, not modern scholarship, not our experiences, our feelings, or our emotions, or anything else. Sola Scriptura is a watchword, a guide for action, for every true Lutheran, pastor or layman.

This was the position and practice of Luther and our Lutheran Confessions. "The Word of God is and should remain the sole rule and norm of all doctrine" (FC SD, Rule and Norm, 9). "We pledge ourselves to the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments as the pure and clear fountain of Israel, which is the only true norm according to which all teachers and teachings are to be judged" (FC SD, Rule and Norm, 3). This is the spirit in which our great Lutheran Confessions speak. Everything we need to believe and do as Christians is told us in the Scriptures. In other words, what God has to say about this or that issue. Just as our Lord Jesus was a man of one Book and drew all His teaching from that One Divine source and submitted Himself to it utterly in all He said and did, so we too who are His disciples today place ourselves joyfully under that prophetic and apostolic Word. And with our Lutheran Confessions we say: "No human being's writings dare be put on a par with it, but . . . everything must be subjected to it" (FC SD, Rule and Norm, 9). So come join us **Tuesdays at 10:00 AM** in the small meeting room in Fellowship Hall and discover "What Does God Say About . . .?"

LADIES THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS

The picture here represents the feeling many people, maybe even you, as we struggle with the basic questions of life.

- **Why was I born?**
- **Why is my life so meaningless?**
- **Why do I experience so much inner conflict in my life?**

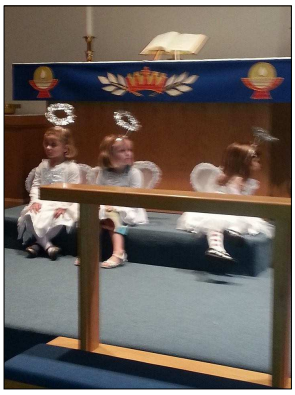
You may also have experienced the inner conflict of trying to lead a decent life, but you fail constantly (Romans 7:9). Why are many people – even Christians – afflicted with deep inner struggles? This Bible Class will help you find answers, not in the wisdom of man, but in the cleansing, hope-giving, and living Word of God.

Ladies of Redeemer: Come and learn of God's abundant mercy for you. God has answers of hope to your questions of struggle and despair. "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2).

We will once again use *GOOD NEWS* magazine as our guide through this amazing study of God's victory over 'THE POWER OF SIN' through the life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let our Divine Physician, Jesus diagnose the causes of frustration in your life. Join us on **Thursday at 10:00 AM** in the large meeting room in Fellowship Hall. All ladies are welcome to join us. You may also invite your girlfriend, sister, mother, or daughter.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

The children of Redeemer Lutheran Church Sunday School & Child Care held their Christmas Program on December 18, 2013. Many thanks to the Child Care and Sunday School Staff for all the hard work that was put in to get the children ready. What a "***Silent Night, Holy Night***" it was.



CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT

DECEMBER 18, 2013

Redeemer Lutheran Child Care wishes you a HAPPY NEW YEAR!

January 2014

Bible Lessons

Chapel is on Tuesday at 3:45

1/7 God's Word Is Important
Luke 2:41-52

1/14 Jesus Is Our Substitute
Matthew 3:13-17

1/21 God Has Mercy on His Children
Luke 17:11-19

1/28Jesus Is All Powerful
Luke 8:40-56

Dear Jesus, give me eyes of faith to see that You are God's beloved Son. Amen!

Congratulations on your years of service!

Ms. Jackie 7 Years
Ms. Cherylann 4 Years

Birthdays

Ms. Katie 1/3
Ms. Lisa V. 1/8
Christopher 1/5
Todd 1/7
Dimitri 1/14
Isabella 1/15
Joslyn 1/17
Grayson 1/20

Congratulations to:

Ms. Lisa Kress on receiving her National Child Development Associate Degree!

Thank you to all the members of Redeemer Lutheran Church who give to the Angel Scholarship Fund. Without these donations some of Redeemer's Children would not be able to attend our school.

What We Are Learning

1/6-1/10 Boy Jesus Studies In The Temple

1/13-1/17 Jesus' Baptism

1/20-1/24 Jesus Heals The Ten Lepers

1/27-1/31 Jesus Raises Jairus's Daughter From The Dead

Santa Lunch

Thank you to all the members of Redeemer Lutheran Church who gave a gift off of the Angel tree for the Santa Lunch! The children had a wonderful time and loved their gifts!

A GREAT BIG THANK YOU TO SANTA!

Submitted by Wendy Horvath

REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH & CHILD CARE
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REV. JAMES T. KRESS, SR.

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:
November—April: 8:00 & 10:30 AM
Sunday School: 9:15 AM
Bible Study: 9:15 AM

CHURCH OFFICE PHONE: 941-475-2410

We, the members of Redeemer Lutheran Church are called into the service of our Lord by accepting His command (Matthew 28:18-20):

- *Making disciples of all nations/peoples.*
- *Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*
- *Proclaiming the Gospel and teaching theWord.*

Christ's love for us compels us to serve our neighbors as He served us.