

Redeemer Lutheran Church

“On Christ, the solid Rock we stand, all other ground is sinking sand.”

Mission Statement: *Founded and focused on Jesus Christ, Redeemer Lutheran Church seeks to welcome, catechize, and baptize all people and strengthen them through God’s Word and Sacraments to live as God’s people in their daily vocations.*

Vision Statement: *Our vision is to provide a place of reverence for the people of God to receive the gifts of God.*

Dear Friends in Christ,

A few weeks ago, we asked the congregation to fill out a questionnaire to help us understand what we value and appreciate as members of Redeemer. Our task force summarized the results of the questionnaire and then we shared the summary with the congregation in a one page bulletin insert. This was done in preparation for submitting a congregational profile to our new Regional Pastor, Robert Mohns, to assist him in putting together a call list of potential pastors who would be well suited for Redeemer.

Pastor Mohns also asked that we prepare a Mission and a Vision statement which would reflect our values. Our task force has put together the statements which you see on the inside cover of today's bulletin. It is these statements that I would like to share with you today.

There may be some confusion about the difference between a mission statement and a vision statement. A **Mission Statement** briefly and clearly describes the purpose and objectives of the congregation. It is our foundational statement of why we exist and what our purpose is. A **Vision Statement** briefly and clearly describes how we see ourselves fulfilling our Mission in the coming months and years. While a vision statement will change from time to time in the life of the congregation, the mission statement is intended to be more permanent.

Our Mission and Vision statements reflect what the congregation has affirmed as its values. So what you see here are the statements that come from your own deeply held convictions. These statements are introduced by a phrase from the chorus of a familiar hymn: "On Christ The Solid Rock We Stand, All Other Ground Is Sinking Sand". That hymn is # 575 in your hymnal: *My Hope Is Built On Nothing Less*. We will sing the verses of this hymn as we proceed with today's message.

This hymn was written by an English layman, Edward Mote, in 1834. It was the only hymn he ever published and only then because of a visit with the wife of a dear friend who was very ill. They wanted to sing a hymn during his visit, but couldn't find a hymnal from which to sing. So, Mote happened to have in his pocket a handwritten copy of the hymn he had recently written. The wife enjoyed the hymn so much that she asked for a copy and Mote decided to have the entire hymn published. Let's now join in singing stanza 1 of hymn # 575:

*My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus blood and righteousness;
No merit of my own I claim
But wholly lean on Jesus' name. (Chorus)*

On Christ, the Solid Rock we stand.

Our congregation is built on the solid foundation of the Old Testament Prophets and New Testament Apostles with Jesus Christ being the Cornerstone of His Church. In Ephesians 2:19-22 St. Paul writes:

"So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit."

Any other foundation will not endure the storms and ravages of a changing world. Jesus clearly teaches this in Matthew, chapter 7, where he speaks of the futility of building a house on sand and the strength and endurance of the house built on the rock. As one of our members eloquently stated, Redeemer is not a church that shifts with the times, but one that “provides a solid Rock in a world that’s gone a bit crazy”.

Let us sing stanza 2 of our hymn:

*When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil. (Chorus)*

Mission Statement

Please join in reading the Mission statement:

Founded and focused on Jesus Christ, Redeemer Lutheran Church seeks to welcome, catechize, and baptize all people and strengthen them through God’s Word and Sacraments to live as God’s people in their daily vocations.

Let us now take a closer look at our Mission Statement. In our Mission Statement, we affirm that we are:

Founded and focused on Christ

Christ is our **foundation**. He is the Messiah promised by God, the Seed of the woman who would crush the head of Satan. (Genesis 3:15) He was prophesied by prophets like Isaiah who foretold of the virgin who would conceive and bear a son (Isaiah 7:14) and Micah who told that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. (Micah 5:2, etc.) Christ was witnessed by the Apostles. In his second epistle, Peter declares:

“We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.” (2 Peter 1:16).

Jesus Christ is the Resurrection and the Life because, having made atonement for our sins, He rose victorious over death and the grave. Foretold and anticipated in ages past, eye-witnessed in his life, death and resurrection, Jesus Christ is the solid foundation on which we exist as a congregation.

Not only is Christ our foundation, he is also our **focus**. All that we do as a congregation is focused on Jesus. In the 12th chapter of Hebrews we read:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith...” Hebrews 12:2).

Keeping our eyes on Jesus, we continue to receive the gifts He so dearly paid for and wants us to receive.

So, thus founded and focused on Christ, Redeemer Lutheran Church seeks to **welcome** – we are a welcoming community. Our Lord welcomed all who responded to His call to repent and believe the Gospel. In Matthew’s gospel, we are told:

“As Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, ‘Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ But when he heard it, he said, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means: I desire mercy, and not sacrifice. For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.’” (Matthew 9:10-11)

In 1 Timothy 1:15 we read: “The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...”.

So, we also seek to welcome into our fellowship all who are looking for what we offer: forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation through Jesus Christ.

Redeemer seeks to **catechize** – to catechize simply means to instruct, to teach. Those whom we welcome, we wish to instruct. The Bible tells us that we are to instruct our children. In Deuteronomy, chapter 6 Moses says:

“These words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7)

We are also to instruct adults who long for a relationship with Christ, as Jesus did with Nicodemus in John, chapter 3 and as Philip did when the Ethiopian official inquired about Christ in Acts chapter 8. (Acts 8:26-38). To do this, we use Luther’s Small Catechism – a marvelous introduction to the Christian Faith. For children (ages 12-14), the period of instruction normally lasts for two years leading up to the rite of Confirmation. For adults, it is a shorter time frame.

Redeemer seeks to **baptize** – Holy Baptism is God’s great gift that bestows forgiveness, life and salvation. Before his ascension to heaven, Jesus tells his disciples that they are to “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...” (Matthew 28:19-20) St Peter tells us that Baptism saves us, (1 Peter 3:21) and St. Paul tells us in Romans that in the Sacrament of Baptism, we are connected to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 6:1-11). Our sinful nature (Old Adam) is buried with Christ, and a new nature is bestowed. In Baptism Christ claims us as His own. It is truly a most blessed Means of Grace.

Redeemer seeks to **strengthen** – Life in this world continues to challenge Christ’s holy people. We are assailed by temptations, attacked by Satan, plagued with doubts and disturbed by our sins and failures. We repeatedly fail to be the people God wants us to be. To strengthen us for these trials, God has provided us with His Word (Law and Gospel) and Sacraments (Holy Baptism, Holy Absolution, and Holy Communion). Together, these are known as the Means of Grace – the means God uses to bestow upon us forgiveness, life, and salvation.

So, Redeemer Lutheran church seeks to **welcome, catechize, baptize and strengthen us: to live as God’s people** in our daily **vocations** – God calls us to live as his children in the various callings or vocations to which He has called us. We are not just fathers and mothers, but Christian fathers and

mothers, not just children, but Christian children, not just a laborer or manager, but a Christian laborer or manager. Whatever calling God has given us, we carry it out as a child of our heavenly Father. We are sheep of the Good Shepherd, fruit of the Good Vine, producing the Good Works of faith and love in our vocations

Please join in stanza 3 of hymn # 575:

His oath, His covenant and blood

Support me in the raging flood;

When every earthly prop gives way,

He then is all my hope and stay. (Chorus)

Vision Statement

Please read the Vision Statement with me:

Our vision is to provide a place of reverence for the people of God to receive the gifts of God.

To provide a **place of reverence** – “The church is not a building”. We often hear this. And it is true, the church is the gathered people of God – living stones in a spiritual house. St. Peter declares this in the 2nd chapter of his 1st Epistle:

“As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priest, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 2:4-5).

That being said, the people of God need a place to gather. We believe that this place is special. The Psalmist calls upon us to “Praise the Lord! Praise God in His Sanctuary. (Psalm 150:1) In fact, our church sanctuary has been dedicated to the glory of God for the use of holy activities, so that, with the Psalmist we also can say, “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the Lord!’” (Psalm 122:1). We consider our sanctuary to be a place of reverence – where God is revered, honored and worshipped. A fittingly appointed sanctuary, stain glass, candles, and fine organ music enhance God’s house and our worship services. Jesus, himself, was upset when the temple was treated irreverently, overturning the tables of the moneychangers (Matthew 21:12-13). God’s people are strengthened in faith when they have a beautiful sanctuary where they can receive the

Gifts of God – This, of course, is why we gather for worship – to receive the gifts God has for us – His Word of Law and Gospel, forgiveness of sins, adoption in Baptism, peace with God in the Body and Blood of Jesus, the assurance of Life and Salvation. All those gifts that we receive in the Divine Service sustain our faith and enable us to live the life to which He has called us. And receiving those gifts, we respond with hymns of praise and prayers of thanksgiving. So with the Psalmist we can declare as we do in the offertory:

“I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the house of the Lord, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!”. (Psalm 116:17-19)

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Please stand and sing Stanza 4 of Hymn # 575.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,

Oh, may I then in Him be found,

Clothed in His righteousness alone,

Redeemed to stand before His throne! (Chorus)