

CORE VALUES

Redeemer Ev. Lutheran Church
West Palm Beach, Florida
Pentecost 2010

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” (Acts 2:42 ESV)

1. “THE APOSTLES’ TEACHING” – The Word of God

It is particularly important in a church that people take a personal responsibility to each other in group Bible study. Such personal responsibility to one another is impossible to be achieved in a worship service. The dynamics of studying God’s Word together and fellowshiping together are important for the continued involvement of every Christian. God works in and through your fellow believers to benefit the Bible students in their participation.

- The example of the Church in Berea *“For they received the Word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.” (Acts 17:11)*
- Jesus confronts and challenges the Jews and all men, even people of today: *“He who is of God hears the words of God; the reasons you do not hear them is that you are not of God.” (St. John 8: 6,47)*
- Jesus said: *“**If** you continue in my Word, **then** you are truly my disciples.” (St. John 8.31)*

Every member is encouraged (and leaders are expected to set examples) to be faithful in group study of God’s Word. In this way the Body of Christ can mature and grow.

2. “THE FELLOWSHIP – Service in the Communion (community) of Saints

Every member needs to be involved in at least one activity within the Body of Christ. There is opportunity to serve in so many ways that most people’s talents and gifts can be used. It is also expected that each member financially support the ministry which is being performed by all the members of the Church. This means an annual “Faith Promise” (a commitment, or pledge) of financial resources that God provides to you so that you can prove the earnestness of your love (*2 Corinthians 8 & 9*). Offerings and gifts to the Lord are not optional but are expected of every Christian as the Scriptures clearly indicate. There are examples in Scripture as well as direct demands to be generous and supportive of the Lord’s work. Such offerings are to be sacrificial gifts and provide a means of praising Him for His generous sustenance.

Being in fellowship also demands integrity in inter-personal relationships. This means that we reject gossip and slander in our midst.

- *Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. (Ephesians 4:25 ESV)*

- *Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (1 Cor 13:7 ESV)*
- *Do not slander one another. (James 4:11 NIV)*

We also hold each other to our Lord's directives in dealing with any confrontation, differences, or need for discipline that may arise in our spiritual community.

- *“So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” (St. Matthew 5:23-24 ESV)*
- *“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.” (St. Matthew 18:15-17 ESV)*

3. **“THE BREAKING OF BREAD and THE PRAYERS” – Our Worship Life**

It is expected of every member to be faithful in worship and in receiving the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Faithfulness is to be defined as being present every Sunday among God's people unless there is a providential reason such as sickness, accident, and the like which would prevent it. The Third Commandment demands it and Scriptures throughout expect the faithful people of God to be present in worship. It has become the habit, custom, expectation of many to think that God is satisfied with half-hearted commitment or a token participation. Neither God nor your fellow members of the Church are satisfied with that kind of participation. *“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”* (Hebrews 10:25 NIV)

Redeemer is a “liturgical” church. That means that the basic pattern of our worship is drawn from the services that have been used by Christians for many centuries all across the world. The components of the Liturgy come from the Bible and serve to focus our worship on God's Word and our response to His Word in faith. As Martin Luther once said, “We worship to hear God speak and to speak to the God who hears us.” If you are new to our worship format let it serve as a witness of our response to God who reaches out to us. In time, we pray that you, too, will celebrate the rich spiritual rewards of our heritage in Worship. [A full explanation of our core values for Worship may be found at <http://www.redeemerwpb.org/5.html> (“Theses for Worship”)]

Our Communion practice, although different from all Protestants, is consistent with the historic practice of the Christian Church, which has regarded unity in doctrine as a prerequisite for admission to the Sacrament (Eucharist) (“oneness at Communion demonstrates oneness in doctrine”).

For this reason the churches of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod practice **Closed Communion**. Closed Communion is the Scriptural and historic practice of limiting participation in the Lord's Supper to those who have been...

- catechized (instructed),
- formally admitted to the Sacrament, after having been examined in the truths of the Christian faith, and
- who have promised to believe, teach and confess all that the church in which they will commune believes, teaches and confesses.

We believe that Holy Communion (the Eucharist) is a special gift of God to His church. This Sacrament is celebrated at this congregation in the confession and glad confidence that, as God says, He gives into our mouths not only bread and wine but the actual Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus to eat and drink for the forgiveness of sins and to strengthen our union with Him and with one another. [A full explanation Closed Communion may be found at <http://www.redeemerwpb.org/6.html> ("Holy Communion at Redeemer")]