

Redeemer Record



PASTOR'S COLUMN

At Christmas we remember that Jesus comes as the light of the world, but that doesn't mean God is not in the darkness.

Read More on Page 2

STEWARDSHIP 2023

Check out the progress we're making with the 2024 Pledge campaign. For surely "We are Blessed to be a Blessing."

Read More on Page 26

MUSIC AND WORSHIP

Wednesday evening Advent services began on November 29th. Mark your calendars to attend and contemplate the arrival of our Savior with this seasonal worship offering.

Read More on Page 7

Pastor's Column

BY PASTOR KATIE HINES-SHAH



I like dark roast coffee and rich garden dirt. I enjoy writing with smooth India ink on new paper. My favorite cats have always been black. I love to brush my daughter's dark brown hair. The night sky over the Serengeti was one of the most beautiful I've ever seen. There is beauty and grace in darkness. And there is holiness too.

At Christmas we remember that Jesus comes as the light of the world, but that doesn't mean God is not in the darkness. The Psalmist knows as much. In Psalm 139, traditionally attributed to King David, we read how deeply God knows each of us – our every thought and action. God, David writes, has known us since we were “being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.” For David there is a wonderful peace in having nothing hidden from God. God loves us that completely. God loves the fullness of creation too. Height and depth make no difference to God in David's Psalm. God's goodness can be found everywhere.

As we head into the winter season, with its shorter days and longer nights, we might want to do more than just look for the light. We might also find life in the quieter, darker places too.

Come embrace God's holy darkness at Redeemer this season, focusing on a simpler, quieter way of entering the season that allows for rest and wonder.

... even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.

- Psalm 139:12

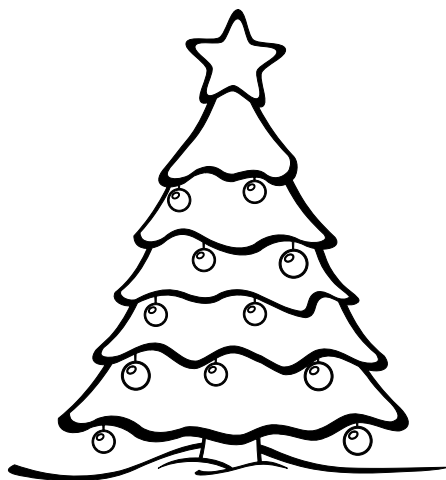


Join us for worship. On Sundays at 8:30 and 11AM (10AM only December 17th and 24th) we will prepare for the coming mystery of Christmas with prayer, preaching, singing, and communion. The Children's Pageant will be on December 10th at 11AM and the Christmas Cantata led by Redeemer's musical groups will take place on December 17th at 10AM. On Wednesdays, starting November 29, we will worship at 7PM recalling God's presence in darkness.



Do devotions. This Advent Season at Redeemer we will also be using Tsh Oxenreider's devotional Shadow and Light. Tsh reminds us that Advent is "not meant to be a season of doing more or having more. Instead, accept the gift of a slow and meaningful season to rest in God's nearness." Join a small group to talk about the readings on Monday mornings with Pr. Kelsey or Wednesday nights at 6:15PM with Pr. Katie.

Give a gift. Once again Redeemer will be giving members an opportunity to buy gifts for needy seniors in our areas or for children at Holy Family School in Chicago. Please pick up at tag on the Giving Tree and return your gifts by December 10th. Quilters will be offering Christmas quilts for sale on December 17th. Remember to make your year-end gifts to Redeemer before noon on December 31st! Thank you for your generosity!



Celebrate Christmas. We will be gathering for candlelight worship on Christmas Eve at 4PM and 7PM and on Christmas Day at 10AM. Even as the luminaria guide your feet, rejoice in the life-giving darkness too.

Christ comes this and every year as the light to the world. His light is so great, it is in all things, including the darkness. May we see Jesus' joy in all times and places.

Thanks be to God!

Associate Pastor's Column

BY PASTOR KELSEY JOHNSON



An Invitation to Wonder

In Godly Play, rather than a prescriptive message of what we ought to believe as Christians, children are invited to wonder about the mysteries of faith through the stories of our scripture. Through this wondering, deep formation takes place as children develop a strong sense of Christian values and where God is present in their lives and out into the wider world. I don't think wondering is only valuable or confined to Godly Play or spaces with children. As adults, wonder is also valuable to our formation and preparation, especially as we enter into Advent and a new liturgical year.



The ancient cycle of the stories of our faith begins with preparing our hearts for the coming Christ child. As our days draw shorter and shorter, we are invited into the Holy darkness of the season to contemplate the mysteries of our faith and anticipate the birth of Jesus. Redeemer's Advent theme of Shadow and Light is sure to spark our own wonderings as this time to gather close and prepare for how we will welcome Christ into our lives and share the good news in our wider community. I wonder where God is calling Redeemer's community this Advent season. I'm looking forward to all the spaces where our community will wonder about the mysteries of faith together.

When I look ahead at the next few months, I am excited for all the ways Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany are about gathering together!

- Wednesday Advent worship from 6:30-7pm is sure to be a thoughtful and contemplative space, with a new guest preacher each week. Come join us in the light and shadows, and enjoy some midweek community.
- Advent small groups on Mondays (7-7:30am, Brewed Awakening) and Wednesdays (6:15-7p, Gathering Space) are a great opportunity to gather in intentional conversation, following our seasonal devotional book Shadow and Light by Tsh Oxenreider.
- Godly Play will focus on the progressing season of Advent, adding a candle to our classroom each week. This program is offered during the 11am service, as well as the 10am Christmas Eve.
- Thursday's 2gather will enjoy cocoa and carols in December, and community games and fellowship in January.

There are so many wonderful ways to wonder about the mysteries of faith and find community at Redeemer. I hope you will join us throughout Advent and into this new year as church!

Vicar's Column

BY VICAR BRENT ELLERBEE



If you've listened to any of my past sermons, then you know that I like to play with perspectives. I like to look at familiar stories and try and see them from a new angle. And Advent is no different. Over the past few weeks, I have been thinking about the Christmas story. In particular, I have been ruminating on the part of the story where Mary gives birth in the manger amongst all the livestock. You know the story. Mary and Joseph travel to his hometown for this new government initiative called the census. Then, through some miscommunication, poor planning, or plain bad luck, they find that there is no room at the inn and have to make do in the stable for the animals. And so the savior of the world is born; God becomes incarnate.

In our Christian tradition, we typically view the fact that Jesus was born among mere animals as proof of his humility. After all, one would imagine that the arrival of God's own son on our planet would occur somewhere special, like the most lavish palace or the grandest temple. But no, God comes to us in near-obscurity, with only the animals as the first witnesses. But what if the point of this detail is not to emphasize the humility of Jesus? What if Jesus being born among the livestock was actually to honor these humble animals? After all, livestock at that time were incredibly important to human survival. Domesticated animals in ancient Israel provided manual labor for farming and travel, dairy and meat for sustenance, and even their body heat to provide warmth to families during the cold winter months. What if Jesus's manger birth was less about his humility and more about honoring the least of these?

As we enter the Advent season here at Redeemer, I wonder if there are any in our midst we can especially honor in this time of joyful expectation. I myself see many worthy candidates. Every Sunday for the past few weeks, the children and youth of Redeemer have been hard at work rehearsing for the



annual Christmas Pageant. Perhaps when we go to see the Pageant on December 10, instead of gushing over how cute they all look in their shepherd cloaks, we can intentionally honor them for the many hours they spent preparing their lines and practicing the songs.

I have also seen our confirmation youth working hard every week by applying their attention and energy to learning what it means to be a member of the church. Perhaps come springtime, amidst all the photo ops, we can take a moment to honor their hard work by telling them how impressive their endeavors really were.

Redeemer's various music groups are yet another example of people working hard behind the scenes. Gargoyle Brass, Festival Choir, Alleluia Ringers, and the Children's Choir all spend precious time during busy weeks to prepare uplifting



and inspiring music. I know our worship would not be the same without the joyous praise they bring. Perhaps the next time we hear any of these groups perform, we can honor them by telling them just how grateful we are for all they give to our church life.

Even though I am suggesting we all give a little more honor and appreciation this Advent season, I know that the people of Redeemer are already well-versed in not only serving the less-fortunate, but honoring them as well. To see proof of this, I need only look at the “Welcome to America” table in the fellowship hall, overflowing with home goods meant to make a refugee family’s transition to America easier. Rather than off-brand products, these gifts are all top-of-the-line, premium items that would make the Magi themselves rethink their meager gifts of frankincense, gold, and myrrh.

Advent is a season of expectation, a time to look toward the future with hope. But it is also a time to look around and see the ways God is already at work in our midst. I myself see God present in all the work you do, and in the genuine love and affection you share with one another. I would like to honor you all by sharing how grateful I am to be here with you during this very special church season. May we all say ‘Rejoice!’

Music & Worship

BY GRAEME SHIELDS



What an active time we've had at Redeemer this fall. Guest organist Peter Douglas and the third annual Bach Around the Block, Reformation Sunday and the Ordination of Pr. Kelsey, All Saints Sunday and an Annual Meeting... phew! Advent, a time of waiting and wondering, is the season upon us, and is very welcome.

Decorating! As we prepared ourselves for the season, many helped Redeemer prepare its space. On Sunday, November 26th after worship, volunteers began bringing Advent and Christmas decorations down from the attic for organizing. Much help was needed in fluffing garland, hanging wreaths, and other small things. Volunteers were also invited to participate in decorating the Chrismon trees in the chancel, hanging angels on the wall, setting up the crèches, and more on Friday, December 1st. We met at Redeemer at 5pm to decorate, eat soup prepared by Pastor Linnea Wilson and Christmas Cookies, and had awesome fellowship with one another.



I invite you to explore **Redeemer's Advent theme this year: Shadow and Light**. The season makes use of Tsh Oxenreider's devotional of the same name as well as new liturgy music written by yours truly. This will feature a new Kyrie, Sanctus, and a new Advent Wreath lighting song that better reflects the themes of the season. All of this began on Sunday, December 3rd.

Midweek worship returned on Wednesday, November 29th from 7:00pm-7:30pm and continues through the Advent Season on Wednesdays, ending on December 20th. This service will contain both familiar tunes and new-to-Redeemer hymns from All Creation Sings. We'll also sing different hymn settings of the Magnificat every week! The liturgy is complete with hymn text about shadow and light along with a bell peal provided by Redeemer's Alleluia Ringers each week.

December brings with it many Redeemer traditions. The **Christmas Pageant** will be on **December 10th at the 11:00am service**. Redeemer's youth have been working hard to present a script written by Lutheran Pastor Andrew Potsko that rhymes throughout the entire pageant. Come hear the story!

The following week on **Sunday, December 17th** is Redeemer's **Cantata Sunday at 10:00am only**. Presented by Redeemer's Festival Choir and Gargoyle Brass, this service will feature **Daniel Pinkham's Christmas Cantata**; it is a pleasure to present this hallmark of a work the same year of the composer's 100th birthday.

Christmas Eve and Day Schedule. Every few years, the lectionary calendar happens to place the fourth Sunday of Advent on December 24th – a day we know very well as Christmas Eve. As luck would have it, 2023 is one of those years! Redeemer's worship schedule will be as follows: December 24th at 10:00am we will celebrate Advent 4 in a hybrid worship service. Later that day will be two Christmas Eve services at 4pm and 7pm, the latter also being hybrid. On Christmas Day, December 25th, we'll enjoy one 10:00am hybrid service.

Epiphany Season. After looking at all of the sun rays that I see on the bulletin board reflecting on Redeemer's hopes for the future, I do see those desiring a variety of worship styles. We'll start not too far from home in Epiphany, which will involve using the setting of the communion liturgy in the ELW that's in a Gospel style: setting 6. This will involve more leading from the piano and hopefully involve more instruments and ensembles from the front of the church. I hope you're all looking forward to this endeavor as much as I am.

Finally, **Reconciling in Christ Sunday is coming up on Sunday, January 28th**. Please keep your eyes peeled for more information in your emails, in announcements, and around the church in ways you can both help and participate in the celebrations.

It is truly a joy to work with Redeemer's singers, ringers, instrumentalists, and indeed the whole congregation. I want to give an especially big thank you to all of Redeemer's musicians in Festival Choir and Alleluia Ringers who have been keeping very busy this fall. They did an excellent job packing the balcony at the Reformation service on October 29th and have been hard at work on their extra bell music and the Pinkham. The Children's Choir have also been working hard on the pageant which I can't wait to see come to fruition. If you're interested and able, we would love to see these groups grow in the new year. Please get in touch with Graeme at music@redeemerhinsdale.org for more information.

Musically Yours,
Graeme



Education Updates

BY PASTOR KELSEY JOHNSON



Communion Class for 4th Grade and Up

REDEEMER
MILESTONES CLASS

First Communion

ESPECIALLY FOR 4TH GRADERS,
OR ANY OLDER KIDS
WHO MAY HAVE MISSED THIS MILESTONE

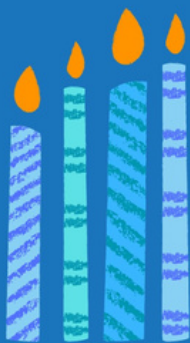
WEEKLY 9:45-10:45 AM
JANUARY 21, 28
FEBRUARY 4
FIRST COMMUNION FEB 11



Acolytes

Acolytes Needed

Confirmation Families,
it's time to sign up for winter
and spring acolyte
opportunities



go to:

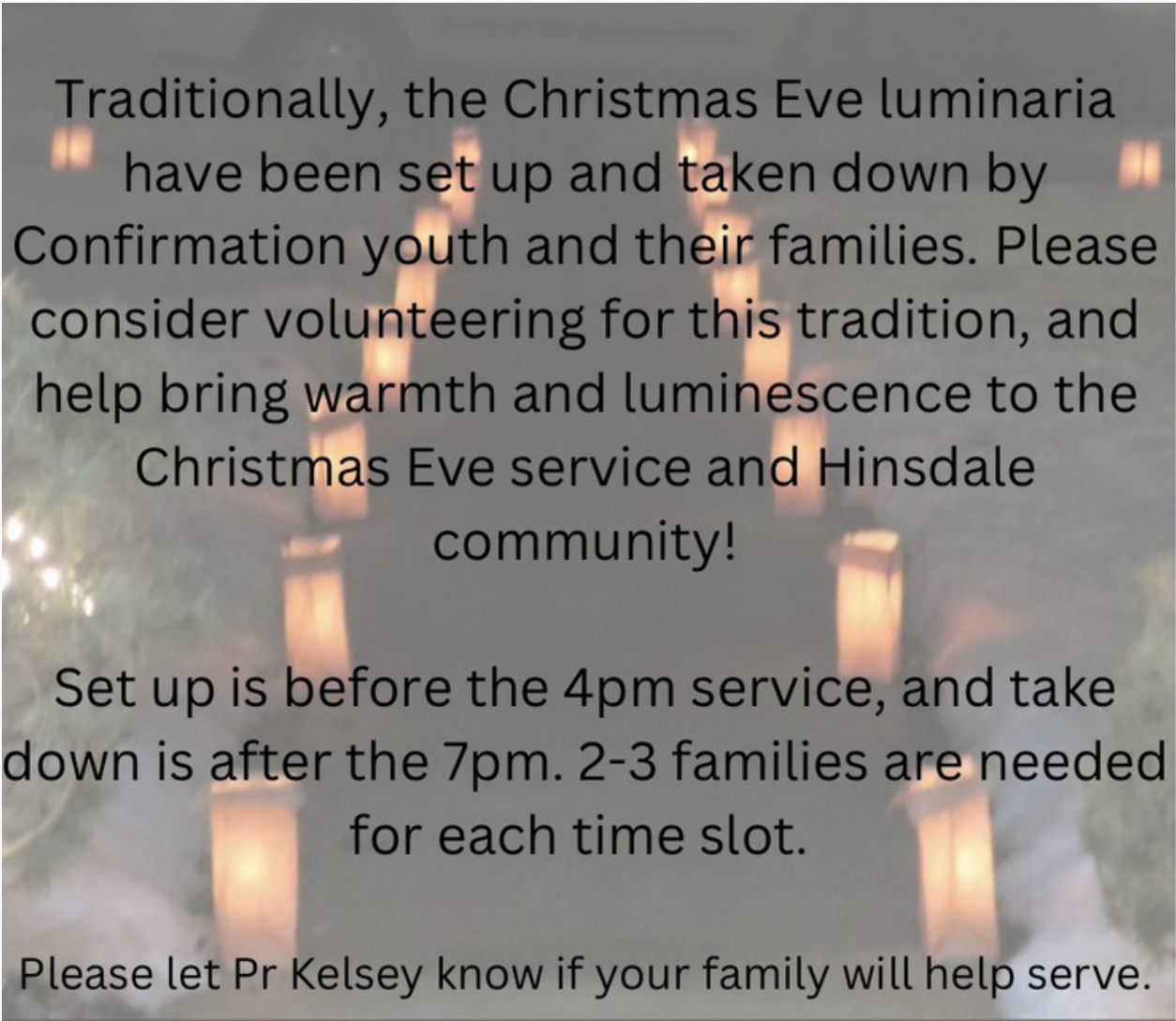
<https://signup.com/go/TtJWYdE>



Cookie Kit Fundraiser



Christmas Eve Luminaria



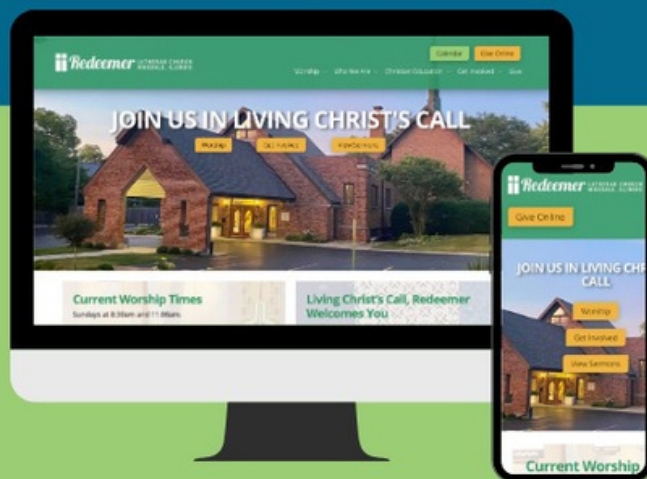
Traditionally, the Christmas Eve luminaria have been set up and taken down by Confirmation youth and their families. Please consider volunteering for this tradition, and help bring warmth and luminescence to the Christmas Eve service and Hinsdale community!

Set up is before the 4pm service, and take down is after the 7pm. 2-3 families are needed for each time slot.

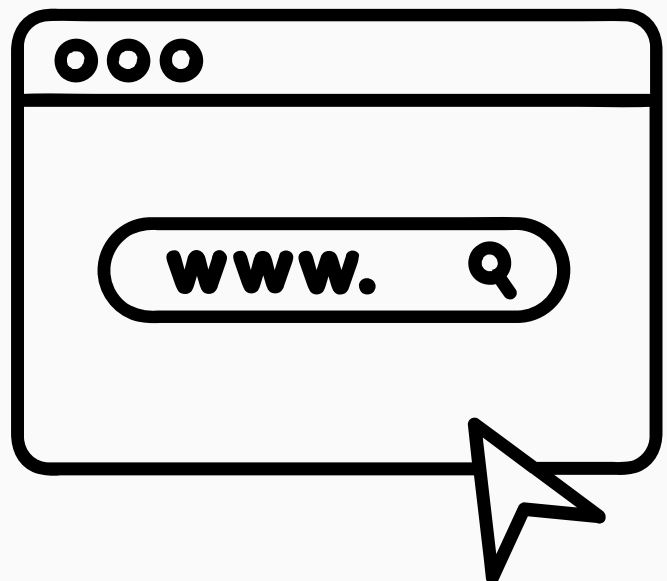
Please let Pr Kelsey know if your family will help serve.

IT'S COMING....

Redeemer's NEW Website



Stay tuned, early 2024





Redeemer Giving Tree 2023

Redeemer will continue to support our mission partners Holy Family School and Hinsdale Community Service seniors again this season!

Holy Family School has provided us with 36 sixth and seventh grade names. And instead of gifts, would like each student to receive a \$25 Target gift card.

HCS has provide us with 55 seniors names. Their gifts are either gift cards or items they requested. The seniors will pick them up on Tuesday, December 19th.

All gifts are due back by Monday, December 10th at Noon.

Thank you!



Ordination of Pastor Kelsey Johnson

BY PASTOR LINNEA WILSON



Ordination...

A RITE of The Church, Right for Kelsey

On a rainy, blustery Sunday afternoon in late October, twenty members of Redeemer worshipped at the Church of St. Luke in Chicago. We had gathered to support and affirm then pastor-elect Kelsey Johnson at the celebratory rite of her ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament.

What a glorious event! The stirring organ music! The heartfelt congregational singing! The Bishop's fervent prayers! And, picture, if you would, the spectacle as soon-to-be-Pastor Kelsey, accompanied by twenty of her colleagues garbed in white albs and red stoles or sashes, processed solemnly down the long nave of the church. Red is the color of the Holy Spirit at work in the life of the church, and on that Sunday God was certainly present as four candidates were ordained and consecrated.



One powerful part of the rite of ordination is the laying-on of hands: while the congregation chanted softly—acknowledging and welcoming the Holy Spirit among those gathered—one after another the gathered pastors and deacons laid hands on each ordinand in turn, offering a prayer or blessing meant for them alone. Then, all the colleagues of the newly ordained gathered around them, extending their hands one on another—a great wall of blessing—to send them into the ministry to which each was called.



Since that day, I've talked about the ordination with a number of our folks who were there, asking what they experienced and how they felt. Perhaps the words of young Iris McGee said it best, "It made me happy!" And so it does! Praise be to God!

Church News and Updates



Poinsettias for Christmas

Redeemer is beautifying the sanctuary again this Advent season with poinsettias from Phillip's Florist. If you would like to purchase/donate toward Christmas poinsettias, please email Jeffery in the church office at: office@redeemerhinsdale.org.

Small poinsettias are available for \$25 and large poinsettias are \$44.50. They will be displayed in the chancel beginning Sunday, December 17th and can be picked up after the last Christmas Eve worship service.

The deadline to place your order is Monday, December 11th.

Thank you!



Altar Flowers

We are blessed to have beautiful flowers in the altar for many Sunday mornings throughout the year. However, staff has noticed the altar flower calendar has quite a few holes. Did you know that you **don't need to spend \$100 to donate flowers** for Sunday morning worship? While this \$100 goes towards Phillip's crafting a beautiful bouquet according to your preferences and dropping it off at the church themselves, **there are other avenues**. When you sign up to provide altar flowers, donating is the easiest way to make that happen. However, you are welcome to pick up flowers from other vendors yourself, or even pick flowers from your own garden! When Sunday services are finished, you are encouraged to take the flowers home for your own enjoyment or bring them to someone you know would appreciate them. We'd love to see more flowers from congregation members during services! We hope that this knowledge of flexibility removes a hurdle and encourages some inspiration. Sign up in the hallway today!





Church Baptism



Owen Scott Lippold was baptized on November 12th. Parents are Dan and Allison Lippold. Proud grandparents are Craig and Marge Chapello.

All Saints Sunday

On Sunday, November 5th, Redeemer honored all the Saints past and present:

SAINTS WITH CHRIST

Judith Ann Ziegenbein
Marian Balster
Rev. LaVerne C. Beener
Irene Goad
Frank William Jeras
Rev. Dennis L. Bushkofsky

CONFIRMED IN CHRIST

Pierce Wittnebel
Aria Greenwald

BAPTIZED IN CHRIST

Hadley Joanne Coughlin
Angelo Mickey Iantosca
Rory Wilson Scott
Evelyn Mary Seuss
Hazel Charlotte Cuccaro





Pastor Kelsey Johnson's Installation

On November 19, 2023, Redeemer installed Kelsey Johnson as Associate Pastor.





Progressive Dinner Thank You

Thank you to everyone who attended this year's Progressive Dinner! It was a great success!

Extra special thanks go to the Women's Connection Committee for organizing, planning, and overseeing the dinner!

Women's Connection Committee:

Marilyn Lindberg, Kathy Selcke, and Marge Chapello



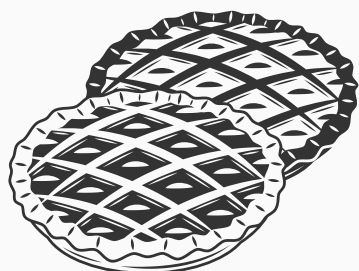
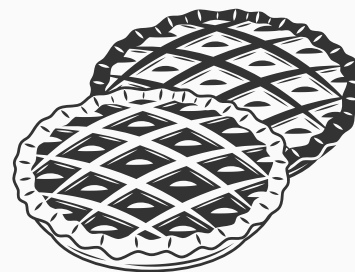
SAVE THE DATE!

May 18, 2024 - *Beautiful Musical*
Sept. 14, 2024 - Progressive Dinner



Redeemer's Annual Pie Social

Thank you to everyone who participated in our annual Pie Social!
A very special thank you to Karen Burns and Annette Martinez.



Quilter's Corner



Redeemer's Quilters work very hard in preparing quilts that are sent to Casa Maria in Guatemala for those in need. Thank you to our dedicated Quilters and to all those who support this vital ministry.

All are welcome to join the quilters on Wednesday mornings in the lower level Fellowship Room.

Redeemer Quilters:

Ina Alikhan, Bev Beener, Connie Bothen, Gwen Entsminger, Dick Goers, Sue Graunke, Bridget Gregory, Diane Homann, Elizabeth Hunter, Karen Johnson, Faith Masek, Hadley McCarthy, Sue Murphy, Ann Roberts, Joan Rosland, Trish Rosland, Judy Rosland, Kate Sahlas, Joan Romer-Sheppel, and Ellie Whitmer





2023 Year End Giving Reminders

As the end of the year approaches, here are a few reminders about your financial support of Redeemer's mission.

2023 OFFERING DEADLINE:

All offerings must be turned in by **noon on Friday, December 29, 2023**, in order to receive credit on your **2023** statement. Any offerings received after noon on December 29th will be credited to your **2024** statement. The date on your check or the date on the envelope will **not** affect the statement year on which the credit appears. A counting team member will be at the church until noon on the 29th to receive your offering. If you mail your offering to the church, please allow sufficient time for it to reach the church office before the 29th.

WAYS TO GIVE:

Of course, you can put your offering into the collection basket, as usual, or drop it off in the church office.

You can also give electronically, authorizing an automatic deduction from your checking or savings account or authorizing a charge to your credit card. Either method can be used for a one-time gift or a recurring gift. On Redeemer's website, you'll find a GIVE ONLINE button. Click on that and you will be guided through the sign-up procedure.

If you already give electronically, please remember to change your account information online if you changed your pledge amount or if you wish to change your gift amount or frequency. If you need assistance in changing that information, contact Deborah Kraus. If you give online using a charge card, consider adding an amount to offset the 3% credit card fee (which Redeemer pays to the credit card company) so that Redeemer receives the full benefit of your gift.

It is possible to support Redeemer and possibly minimize your tax liability by giving in a few other ways. You can get more information on these giving alternatives by contacting Deborah Kraus, our Financial Secretary. (Contact your tax advisor for specifics for your situation.)

- Giving a gift of appreciated stock can reduce the amount of tax you pay for capital gains.
- An IRA required minimum distribution can be sent directly to Redeemer. The transfer generates no taxable income nor a tax deduction. But, since the gift doesn't count as income, it can reduce your annual income level which may help lower Medicare premiums and decrease the amount of Social Security that is subject to tax.
- If you participate in a family foundation, you may direct a grant to Redeemer.

Again, these gifts must be received no later than noon on December 29.

Thank you for your continuing support of Redeemer through your time, talent, and treasures.



New Member Classes

Have you been worshipping at Redeemer for a while? Are you ready to commit to deeper involvement in the church? Would you like to know more about membership?

Members at Redeemer make a public pledge to join with the people of Redeemer in living out the promises of baptism:

**to live among God's faithful people,
to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,
to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.**

– Affirmation of Baptism Evangelical Lutheran Worship p. 236

Joined in Christ, members at Redeemer Lutheran church work to do ministry in the world. The benefits of membership are truly priceless, even eternal!

We'll be organizing a new membership class **Saturday, January 20th from 9-11AM**. Childcare will be provided if requested. New Members will be welcomed on **Sunday January 21st at both the 8:30 and 11AM Worship Services**. If you cannot commit to these dates or have more questions about membership, please talk to Pr. Katie.



Christmas Holiday Office Hours

The church office will be closed for the Christmas holiday on December 25th through January 1st.

Please call the office if needed at 630-323-5530 or email at office@redeemerhinsdale.org.

Upcoming Events



b e n d i n g
T O W A R D S
the Light
a Jazz Nativity

SUNDAY, DEC. 17 AT 4:00 P.M.
ST. CLETUS PARISH CENTER

FREE ADMISSION | DONATIONS ACCEPTED | WWW.EDWARDFAS.COM

Edward
FINE ARTS SERIES
AT ST. CLETUS LA GRANGE, IL

All are invited! Mark your calendars for *Bending Towards the Light, a Jazz Nativity*, on **December 17 at 4PM**, St. Cletus Church Parish Center located next to the church at 600 W. 55th St., LaGrange. Free admission. The jazz nativity, produced by our member Andy Tecson, tells the story of Jesus' birth using both improvisation and traditional holiday songs. This performance features 24 of Chicago's top jazz musicians, singers and two dancers.

Come and hear the story in a new way!





RIC UPCOMING EVENTS



**JAN 28
RIC SUNDAY
ADULT FORUM**

**Panel Discussion with
Pastor Paul Willey (He/Him),
of the Metro Chicago Synod**

Financial Report

BY KIM ENDERS



Redeemer Lutheran Church 2023-24 First Quarter Financial Review

Redeemer's first quarter of the 2023-24 ended on September 30, 2023, and Redeemer achieved a Net Income of \$16,548. This is holding steady as the first quarter income of Net Income for 2022-23 had a loss of \$9,316. Offerings were up \$6,402 for the first three months of the year in comparison with the first three months of the 2022-2023 year, and were 21% of our budgeted offerings as of the first quarter, so we are four percent off budget. However, because of a counting delay, this quarter contains offerings for the first two weeks of October, skewing the results and resulting in a larger deficit. Expenses were also lower than expected. Expenses for the year to date were \$14,127 less than the 2022-2023 year and were 19.5% of the budgeted amount. Although the Associate Pastor salary will be a new expense during the 2023-24 annual period, with generous giving we can more than make our financial goals.

The church continues to stand in a strong financial position. The Balance Sheet shows total Equity amount of \$1,351,760. As a percentage of Total Assets, the third quarter-end year to date distribution was as follows: \$720,759, 53%, in Restricted Funds, \$441,206, 33%, in Special Designated Purpose Funds, and \$189,794, 14%, in Unrestricted/Undesignated Funds. We have 4.7 months of cash reserves at the current expense rate without accessing any balance sheet reserve accounts. This amount of Unrestricted Funds is about the average amount we have held in the recent past. Recent market fluctuations in the year 2022-2023 had the effect of reducing overall Equity, and in particular, the Unrestricted/Undesignated funds if recent gifts are excluded. However, investments have been rebounding.

2023-24 First Quarter Financial Results Summary Through September 30, 2023:

	Revenue (All Sources)	Expenses	Net Surplus/Deficit
July 1, 2023 – Sept. 30, 2023	\$137,630	\$121,083	+\$16,548
July 1, 2022 – Sept. 30, 2022	\$125,893	\$135,209	-\$9,316
2023-24% of Budget	22.1%	19.4%	
2023-24 Total Budget	\$621,900	\$589,516	

First Quarter End Balance Sheet	September 30, 2022	September 30, 2023
Total Assets	\$1,207,051	\$1,351,760

We are currently in Stewardship Season and hope that we can increase the number of pledges received. Last year we received 77 pledges. We are on track to receive the Behnke Estate in the spring of 2024. Redeemer held two informational sessions regarding the use of bequest and the investment of all Redeemer's funds on Sunday, November 5, 2023 and Sunday, November 12, 2023 at 9:45 am during the Adult Education hour. All input was appreciated. On Sunday, November 19, 2023 at 9:45 am at the Annual Congregational Meeting, a change to the bylaws was presented and approved.

Stewardship Recap 2024

BY LANNY WILSON



We are Blessed to be a Blessing

Each year, our stewardship campaign is based upon a Bible verse. This year, the stewardship committee chose the following verse from Jeremiah 29 10-11: “I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For surely I know the plans I have for you, says God, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.” From that, A Future with Hope was chosen as this year’s theme. Our hurting world needs a place and a people whose purpose is to give hope and comfort. We hope to be the bright light, the lighthouse in the storm, for our community and for the world beyond.

As the month of November comes to an end, the stewardship committee would like to thank all who have recognized their call to be a blessing to the many ministries in which Redeemer is committed. We are good and generous Christians, Redeemer! One of the many ways we demonstrate generosity is through our pledges:

- For 2022, there were 66 pledges totaling \$430,566,
- For 2023, there were 77 pledges totaling \$467,477, and
- For 2024 (thus far), there have been 76 pledges totaling \$455,848.... and hopefully more to come!



As well as we have done thus far, our stewardship team of generosity coaches is still in high hopes that there will be other members of our Redeemer Church Family who will step forward with a pledge for 2024. December is the month when generous spirits abound. So, we optimistically wait and hope.

“... and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.”

- Genesis 12:2b

As well as we have done thus far, our stewardship team of generosity coaches is still in high hopes that there will be other members of our Redeemer Church Family who will step forward with a pledge for 2024. December is the month when generous spirits abound. So, we optimistically wait and hope.

We Christians remember, with the coming of the Christ child into the world, there is much to hope for this time of year. Even though there are challenges in our community, county, and world, we cherish the light we have been given – by God and by those who have gone before us. We know that Redeemer is the Church that will share the light and the love of Christ on this earth that is devoid of too many stars. We know that Redeemer is driven by its well-chosen mission: “United in Christ, we share God’s love in an ever-changing world.”



Generosity, other-centeredness, mercy, compassion, faith, hope, love: these are qualities of being Christ-like. We have these qualities dear friends. We are blessed to be a blessing and to share God's love in this ever-changing world. Thank you, Redeemer. We are providing A Future with Hope for many, and for many generations to come!

In God's love,

Redeemer's Stewardship Team of Generosity Coaches:
Pastor Katie, Pastor Kelsey, Vicar Brent, Margaret Schlegel, Jim Toomey, Mark Rosland, Deborah Kraus, Rodney Holmes, Missy Roberts, Galen Banashak, and Lanny Wilson

2023/ 2024 Council Highlights

BY LINDA CARPENTER



September 21

- Approval of 2024 insurance coverage package.
- Approval of Associate Pastor salary package offer.
- Approval of agenda for special congregational meeting on September 24 to call Kelsey Johnson as Associate Pastor for a 3-year term.

September 24 Special Congregational Meeting

- The Congregation voted unanimously to issue a 3-year term call to Kelsey Johnson as Associate Pastor.

October 26

- Received an update on pledge progress.
- Received updates on the Susan Behnke bequest and the Investment Committee search for an investment advisor.
- Approved the Investment Committee's recommendation to hire Mercer Advisors to advise on handling monies coming from the Behnke bequest, as well as on other funds outside our operating account which are invested in various places, such as the Covenant Endowment Fund, Vanguard Funds and Evergreen Bank CDs.
- Accepted the Nominating Committee's nomination for 3 new Nominating Committee members.
- Approved the agenda for the November 19 Annual Congregation Meeting.

November 19 Annual Congregation Meeting

- The Congregation elected Cindy Cimo, Jacquie Ravnice, and Kate Sahlas to the Nominating Committee.
- The Congregation voted to amend the By-Laws to enable undesignated gifts to be used for Operating Expense as well as to be placed in Reserve Accounts.

November 30

- Continued to hear updates on the Behnke bequest and investment Committee progress.
- Received updates on audit progress.
- Received an update on pledge status (1 pledge short of last year's number of pledges, as of this date).
- Cancelled December meeting.

Ask any Council member if you have questions concerning Council meetings. Minutes from all Council meetings are available for your review in a white binder in the credenza outside Pastor Katie's office.

Healthy Spiritual Journey

BY LANNY WILSON



Consolation. Desolation. Holiday Prayers



Making an argument for the power of prayer, our retreat leader suggested that the way out of painful fear, depression and desolation – moving toward joy, spiritual delight, and consolation – is to invite the divine into our lives through prayerful conversations with God. During our annual pilgrimage to the Jesuit's White House Retreat Center on the banks of the Mississippi River outside of St. Louis,

we focused on consolation, desolation, and prayer. With the holidays fast approaching, and knowing that the incidence of depression increases this time of year, it seems that holiday prayer should be promoted along with all of the holiday advertisements for toys, other gifts, songs, celebrating, and holiday cheer.

According to the American Psychological Association, holiday stresses can lead to physical illness, anxiety, substance misuse, depression, even desolation. Among the many possible explanations are loneliness, financial pressure, unmet expectations, unrealistic advertising, and disconnection with God. Even though the God Factor is seldom mentioned, studies have shown that as many as eighty percent of people would like to have their spirituality addressed when they are in need of medical help. Thus, I dedicate this healthy spiritual journey message to the relatively silent, spiritual majority.

“...God revealed a supreme spiritual delight in my soul [consolation]. In this delight, I was filled full of everlasting surety, powerfully secured without any painful fear [desolation].”

- Julian of Norwich

It does not seem to be a stretch to say that we all go through ups and downs in our emotional lives. An extreme form of that roller coaster ride of emotions is the condition known as bipolar disorder, formerly called manic-depressive disorder. Let us leave that conversation to the professional counsellors and therapists who have studied its diagnosis and treatment. What I hope to promote is the possibility that a deeper connection with our spirituality, with our prayer life, and ultimately with God will enhance our ability to move ourselves from depression/desolation to consolation/joy and spiritual delight.



Nothing can separate us from the love of God. In times of consolation, we should humbly be grateful for the joy which we are experiencing. In times of desolation, God's everlasting grace can enable us to carry on. Holiday prayers should not just be saved for Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, or whatever holiday we are celebrating. They should be offered daily, thanking God for such things as amazing grace, joyous occasions, the life of Jesus, family, and friends. They should be offered daily, requesting an end to such things as war, violence, hunger, sadness, and all that ails this hurting world. Holiday prayers should be conversations with our friend and partner, God. How can we help? What more can we do?

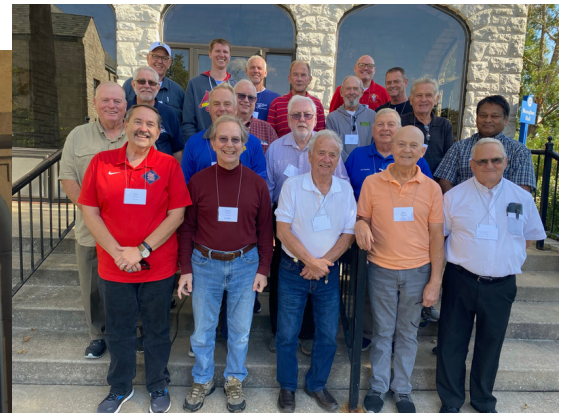
As we continue our healthy spiritual journey, let us remember that consolation is there for the asking, that desolation can be overcome, and that holiday prayers can simply be daily conversations with God.

In God's love,

Lanny F. Wilson, MD

"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

- Romans 8:38-39





Christmas Schedule

December 24

Advent 4 • *10:00am

Christmas Eve • 4:00pm, *7:00pm

December 25

Christmas Day • *10:00am

*Zoom and Livestream Services

