

The Redeemer Spirit



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Redeemer Friends: I have been thinking what to write this month and to be honest my source of any original thinking or reporting has come up empty. So I resort to another's writing not only to bail me out, but particularly to focus on the season we are now in: Advent. Here is a poem by the author Madeleine L'Engle:

Into the Darkest Hour

*It was a time like this,
War & Tumult of War,
a horror in the air.
Hunger yawned the abyss-
and yet there came a star
and the child most wonderfully there.*

*It was a time like this
of fear and lust for power,
license & greed and blight-
and yet the Prince of bliss
came into the darkest hour
in quiet & silent night.*

*And in a time like this
how celebrate his birth
when all things fall apart?
Ah! Wonderful it is
with no room on the earth
the stable is our heart*

May this season serve to straighten and sustain us whatever our circumstances might be.

In faith,
Geoffrey Platt
Senior Warden



ON AND ON AND ON

One of the unnamed consequences of becoming Junior Warden is that my husband will be conscripted to help out. Thank you, Brian. Here he is with Laura preparing one of the shelves to be installed in the new coat closet. He has cleaned the refrigerator, dug and cleaned out the 100-acre-woods area, hauled trash away, spent countless hours weeding, cleaned up after receptions, and he has edited numerous submissions. Most importantly, he has supported me.



The Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, Bethesda, Maryland, USA

The biggest projects are complete but the work continues. There are still safety issues that need to be addressed: updated lighting outdoors, leveling the outdoor sidewalks, and removing the large overhanging branches above the rectory. There is the punch list from the flood repairs that needs to be completed. However, the parish hall and the sanctuary have once again become light, bright, and beautiful.

We are in the season of pledging and I would like to take this opportunity to tell you why Redeemer is important to me. I came to Redeemer in 1999 at the invitation of Jo Campa. At the time there were only seven of us in the choir. The small electric organ at the time was known to emit blue smoke, and on one Easter Sunday the G-pedal fell off. Trust me when I say it wasn't the music that drew me. Redeemer was the first place I had seen a female priest presiding. Over the passing years I came to understand that with every person I met I saw the face of God, and with every peace passed I received the grace of God. For me personally, I hope that when visitors walk through our doors, they are able to see the face of God in each person they meet, and that they receive the grace of God through the joy, warmth and acceptance of our congregation.

So, yes, Redeemer needs your financial support. We need to continue to pay our staff. We need to keep the utilities on. We need to keep the music flowing. We need to keep the lawns mowed, and we need to finally address deferred maintenance issues in both the church building itself and the rectory. Please prayerfully consider the needs of Redeemer as you think about your financial commitment.

Peace,
Jo Barclay-Beard
Junior Warden



There is a gnat in my office. It's been dive-bombing me for weeks. I'm not sure why. I don't wear cologne or fragrances. I don't use sugar in my coffee. My swatting and attempts at execution have been in vain.

Becki witnessed this little bug whirling around my head during a supervisory meeting. Laughing, she suggested it might be the Holy Spirit, since it seemed to be ever-present. I said that she might be right about the Holy Spirit because the gnat was annoying!

Advent can seem like an annoyance to our culture. While we're getting on with decorating, gift purchasing or making, and holiday baking, Advent bids us to slow down and be quiet. The Holy Spirit is brooding.

In ancient days, she brooded along with the prophets as they warned God's people of the consequences of delaying justice. She hovered over the womb of a young woman in Galilee making it possible for Mary to birth Jesus. Today, her messages of old are new again.

"Signs of ending all around us," we sing in Advent. Scriptures tell of earthquakes, birth pangs, and exile. As if this time of the year isn't difficult enough, the Spirit appears to drop a black cloud on us as well. We can't forget is that we are living in the hope we want and need, even in our darkest days. The Spirit that forewarned the prophets brought forth, with humanity's consent, the balm to calm our fears.

Things may look bleak some days, but we keep moving forward despite our fears of the unknown. Christ, our Light that pierces the darkness, keeps us company on the journey. Christ never fails us.

Now, if he could just do something about that gnat.

There's a lot going on at Redeemer. You can engage in Bible Study, Advent Book Study, Music at Redeemer events, as well as Redeemer traditions such as Toy and Cookie Sundays.

The most important Sunday in December is the first one – Pledge Sunday.

Friends, I cannot say more emphatically how important it is to deliver your pledge by that day. While I can say confidently that Redeemer's funds were not misused, I cannot lie to you and say that we didn't use a lot of them. Steve Gibson's report provides more information. Our budget is bare bones. Ninety percent of your pledges go to maintain this building and pay the staff. There's no getting around that fact.

The bottom line is that all the activities - worship, the music, the study groups, youth group – are dependent on your pledge. The building and staff are the framework on which all the activities hang. They don't do your ministry for you, but they make it possible for your ministries to happen.

You should receive the letter from the pledge chairs and a pledge sheet soon if you don't already have it in hand. Pray to God for guidance. Then, complete your pledge commitment and send it to Margaret.

Redeemer is counting on you.

Amma Cricket+



**WHAT MAKES YOUR HEART SING?
What does it mean to sing with all your heart?**

At one level (the level of the literal) neither question makes any sense at all. Hearts don't "sing," they pump blood. When people sing, they do so by means of vocal cords through which—at varying pitches, volumes, and tempos—the singers process breath as it is exhaled from their lungs.

But, of course (at the level of the metaphorical) both questions make eminent sense. And how we answer each says a great deal about who we are and where we happen to be in our lives.

Singing elevates the enunciation of words into quantum levels of new expression and meaning. Singing is not simply the vocal equivalent of "a spoonful of sugar that makes the medicine go down." Joy, sorrow, anger, peace, alienation, empathy—the full range of human emotions from the trivial to the profound—none can be given full voice without being SUNG. Singing is not merely the adding of artistic flavoring. Singing says more, means more than words alone convey.

It is no surprise that the season leading up to the celebration of Christmas is all but inconceivable apart from listening to carols, and "singing along" (even if we're self-conscious

about how we sound—or think ourselves incapable of “carrying a tune”).

It’s also no surprise that the Scriptures we hear during the seasons of Advent and Christmas are filled with words originally written to be sung. There are Psalms or Psalm-substituting Canticles each Sunday. (Nothing unusual about THAT—it happens every Sunday. It’s just that, on ordinary Sundays, we tend simply to read the Psalm aloud, to convey it by plainsong or Anglican chant; or to delegate it to a choir who sings it in our stead.) During Advent and Christmas, however, singing bursts forth from all across the designated Scriptures. The Old Testament Lessons are all settings of songs. Songs find their way into the New Testament and Gospel readings as well:

- Advent 2 (12/5): Baruch 5:1-9, Luke 1:68-79 (Canticle 16, The Song of Zechariah), Luke 3:1-6 (incorporating a song section from Isaiah 40).
- Advent 3 (12/12): Zephaniah 3:14-20, Isaiah 12:2-6 (Canticle 9).
- Advent 4 (12/17): Micah 5:2-5a, Luke 1:46-55 (Canticle 15) or Psalm 80:1-7, Hebrews 10:5-10 (which appropriates verses from Psalm 40), Luke 1:39-55. (On the Sunday before Christmas we might even hear Magnificat, the Song of Mary, TWICE!)
- Christmas Day (12/24-5) Isaiah 9:2-7, Psalm 96, Luke 2:1-20 (which includes the Gloria in Excelsis, the song of the angels to the shepherds).
- The First Sunday After Christmas (12/26): Isaiah 61:10-62:3, Psalm 147

It is striking that during these Sundays the Epistle Lessons—readings usually more conceptual, expository, didactic (in a word, less “sing-able”)—these lessons tend to retreat to

the sidelines and are often much shorter than usual. (There’s a “sermon” in that, I suspect, for This Preacher!)

A suggestion: Pick one of those “singing” lessons. Read it aloud in an interpretive “singing” voice. Or, as you read it silently, try to hear it as sung by a soloist, an ensemble, or a large choir. Since many of these texts have been set to music, get a recording of one and listen to it several times.

Some questions:

- What additional dimension of meaning comes from that hearing or singing of this text?
- Why is Christmas so inextricably intertwined with singing?
- What do “singing,” and “song” mean when released from their literal meaning and allowed to take root in your heart—whatever it may be trying to express?
- How does your heart show who and how it is in song?

David+

“WE HAVE 27 KITCHEN CABINETS!”

Jesus said “seek and you shall find.” The youth group, following Jesus’ request, did a scavenger hunt inside and outside the church last month. How well would you do?

In the *Book of Common Prayer*, find the page number for the following:

- Morning Prayer, Rite II
- Easter Vigil Liturgy
- Eucharistic Prayer D
- Compline
- Service of Reconciliation
- Finding the date of Easter
- St. Julian of Norwich’s feast day

Redeemer’s youth group took to the *BCP* to discover where we get our liturgies. We talked about the historical documents at the back of the book and who wrote some of the prayers. They weren’t only book worms! They also found items such as these:

- Baptismal font
- St. Luke
- Flight to Egypt window
- Labyrinth bell
- 1903 Chapel Hanging

There were a few esoteric items as well, such as

- Where are the fire extinguishers?
- How many cabinets are in the kitchen?
- How many beanbags are in the youth room?
- What are the color of Cricket’s socks?

This month, we go caroling with the congregation. The next evening meeting will be Wednesday, January 12, at 6:30pm.



THE WILD GOOD NEWS OF THE INCARNATION.

My dear brothers and sisters,

Due to the wonderful circumstances of being able to travel to England to see my much beloved and missed family who I have not been with in over 2 ½ years, I will be absent from my Redeemer family for most of Advent. This is my most favorite season of the entire year for it gives us an entire month to concentrate on the unbelievable yet true gift of the entering of the Almighty, ineffable and transcendent God into His own creation in all its limitation and ordinariness. The fact that God became one of us in Jesus settles for all time the “meaning of life” for me and assures us of the dignity and preciousness of each of us, regardless of how we might feel in the moment. That incarnation gives us a doorway into the divine life of the source of life itself and hallows its likeness in each of us. I pray that in this season you might experience the wonder and awe of that hallowing and let it bathe your soul in joy, healing and grace. Rather than say more about it I want to share with you my absolute favorite Advent/Christmas poem. It is offered as the Basis of Christian Spirituality in the book “The Holy Longing” by Ronald Rolheiser and I pray it blesses your Advent Journey! I will miss you all!

With much love!
Deacon Adrienne+



SHARON'S CHRISTMAS PRAYER

she was five,
 sure of the facts,
 and recited them
 with slow solemnity
 convinced every word was revelation.

She said they were so poor
 they had only peanut butter and jelly
 sandwiches to eat and they went a long way
 from home
 without getting lost. The lady rode a donkey,
 the man walked, and the baby was inside the
 lady.

They had to stay in a stable
 with an ox and an ass (hee-hee)
 but the Three Rich Men found them
 because a star lited the roof
 Shepherds came and you could pet the sheep
 but not feed them.

Then the baby was borned.
 And do you know who he was?
 Her quarter eyes inflated
 To silver dollars.

The baby was God.
 And she jumped in the air
 whirled round, dove into the sofa
 and buried her head under the cushion
 which is the only proper response
 to the Good News of the Incarnation.

John Shea



LEAVES ARE BEGINNING TO PILE AROUND CAMPUS.

Every day, at the seminary, there’s a dedicated crew who blow the leaves off the sidewalks and then cart them away. It seems endless. At my home in Colorado, the only deciduous trees we had were aspens. They turned the most remarkable shade of yellow; leaving entire mountainsides shrouded in gold. But here, I am in awe of the variety of reds and oranges, shapes and sizes. Autumn feels more festive on the East Coast.



When I find a particularly lovely leaf in my path, discarded, and ignored, I often pick it up and take it with me. These leaves serve as metaphorical reminders. Each leaf was an important part of the previous season. Each leaf contributed to the

fullness of what life has held. Taking the time to appreciate these unique gifts reminds me to take stock of my year. The fall is busy as I rush to complete assignments and finish all the things I’ve been putting off. It’s easy to be so harried, rushing towards the holidays and the New Year that I blindly put the past behind me. But this time of year, it feels important to stop and collect the treasures, lessons, and memories before they get filed away or forgotten. To be honest, looking back isn’t always easy. Sometimes the most important things I carry forward from the previous year are painful lessons or experiences, but there are always heartwarming recollections and gifts of faith that carry me forward.

The Bible is full of examples of admonitions to remember. God gave rainbows to recall his covenant with all living things. Joshua had the Israelites set up memorial stones to recall God’s faithfulness to generations to come after crossing the Jordan River. Jacob set up stones for recollection after his encounter with God at Bethel. In keeping the Law, Jews continue to place Mezuzah’s on their doorways as an act of remembrance. Likewise, Christians keep the memorial feast through the Eucharist in obedience to Christ. Commemoration is an important sacramental act. We live in a fast-paced world that is constantly racing towards the next thing. Taking the time to be reflective is an act of resistance. It says the gifts God has given and the lessons learned are valuable. Treasuring the previous season is also an act of stewardship. It provides the opportunity to absorb what has been experienced in preparation for new things to arrive. The beautiful leaves teach us the value of remembrance.

In what way will you preserve the events, gifts, and lessons of the past season? I invite you to join me by taking some time to consider the treasures before they are blown away and discarded in the haste of all this is to come.

Becki

WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR CASH AND CHECK DONATIONS?

Hum the *School House Rock* song “I’m just a bill on Capitol Hill” as you read--

Redeemer, as a non-profit, uses procedures called Internal Controls to protect the Church’s assets.

Collection and processing of cash and check donations are protected using two internal controls: *Safeguarding Assets - locking up cash, checks, and donor information

As outlined in Redeemer’s *Financial Procedures Manual*, cash and checks are put into the Church safe when they are received. On Sundays after the service, two non-staff Church members count the cash and checks that came in during the week along with any contributions made during the service. They fill out and initial a counters’ sheet that shows the total of the cash, the total of the checks, and the number of checks. They fill out deposit tickets, make copies of the checks, and stamp the Church name and account number on the back of each check. The deposit is returned to the safe to wait for a Church member volunteer to take to the bank.

The counters’ sheet, a copy of the deposit tickets, and the check copies are left in the safe for the bookkeeper to verify the totals and record each check or cash donation in QuickBooks and Servant Keeper making sure to attribute the donation to the right donor. The copies of the donor checks are kept locked in the Church office. The software used is protected with passwords. A copy of the counter’s sheet (and bank statements and reconciliations) is also given to the Treasurer.

These procedures protect the cash and donor information from theft and help prevent error or fraud.

Margaret



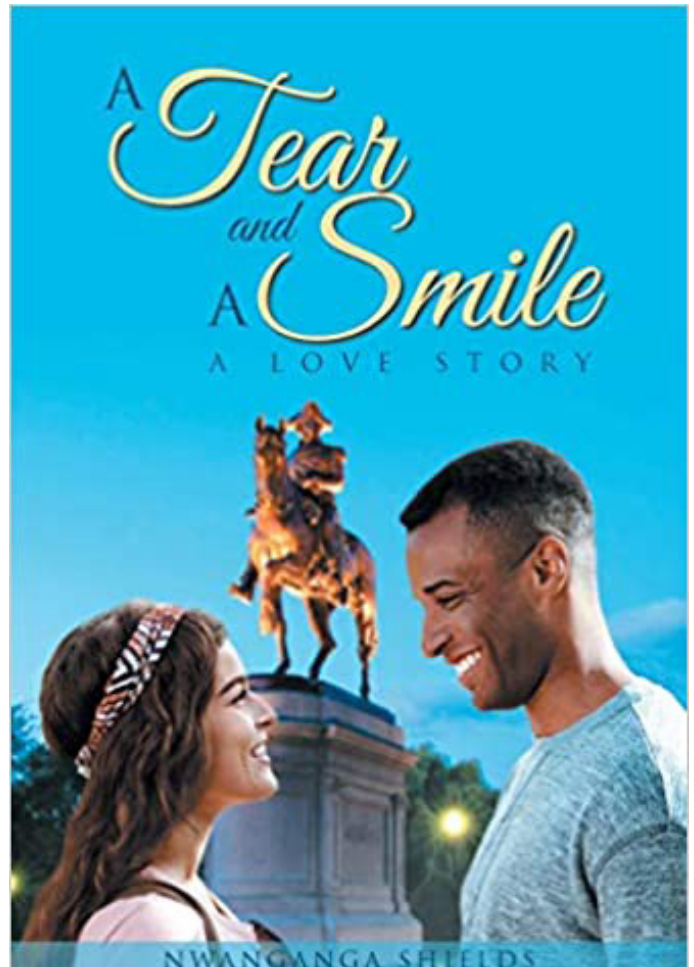
**Segregation of Duties—breaking down tasks that might reasonably be completed by a single person into separate tasks so no one person is solely in control.*

REDEEMER BOOK GROUP**Book Club Selects Local Author**

The Redeemer Book club will read the latest book by our very own Nwanganga Shields - *A Tear and a Smile: A Love Story*.

The book is a love story of Clint, a Washington DC attorney whose hobby is searching and learning about lesser-known memorials, and Cece a girl he met under an unusual circumstance one spring weekend. These offspring of immigrant lineages pursue their American dreams while facing the devastation of racism, tribalism, and ethnocentrism. This is the second book of Nwanganga's that the group has read.

The book will be discussed at 3pm on Sunday, December 5. Venue will be announced closer to date of meeting. For more information, please contact Huda Kraske at hqkraske@aol.com or nshields@verizon.net.

**REDEEMER'S OLIVE OIL MINISTRY Virtual Holiday Sale Sunday, Dec 5**

Redeemer is a long-time member of the Olive Oil Ministry, an ecumenical group of churches in the metro area that supports Palestinian farmers and their families, who continue to depend considerably on our enjoyment of their truly delicious oil. During this special holiday sale, olive oil, soaps, spices, and tapenades make wonderful gifts from the people of the Holy Land.

Products for sale. Olive oil in half-liter bottles (\$20) of three kinds: Nabali (lighter, fruitier), Rumi (robust, spicier), and a Nabali–Rumi blend. The blend is also available in 1-liter cans (\$30). Handmade soap (\$5 bar). Zaatar spice (\$6 package). Wild Caper Olive Tapenade (\$7 jar). All oil is certified organic and fair trade sourced.

To order and arrange for home delivery, please contact Marie France (tweedfrance@gmail.com or 301.320.1534).

LUNCH WITH JESUS

Each Wednesday at Noon, the clergy and curious lay folk gather on Zoom to read and discuss the scriptures coming up that Sunday. It's a free-flowing, question-raising, and sometimes challenging conversation that many times leads the assigned preacher into new territory. Think of it as one of the 'prequels' to your experience of worship—you'll hear the readings again, in a different voice, and sometimes you will hear elements of our discussion bubble to the surface of the actual sermon. Bring your study Bible and join us this week. The Zoom link is on the Redeemer home page.



CAROLING AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Christmas Carols in Bannockburn—come sing unison carol favorites around the neighborhood on Saturday, December 19th

Meet at Church at 4 p.m.

**Festive wear: Santa Hats or Reindeer Antlers
(bring a flashlight and dress warmly!)**

**CATECHISM CORNER:
HUMAN NATURE**

What are we by nature?

We are part of God’s creation, made in the image of God.

What does it mean to be created in the image of God?

It means that we are free to make choices: to love, to create, to reason, and to live in harmony with creation and with God.

Why then do we live apart from God and out of harmony with creation?

From the beginning, human beings have misused their freedom and made wrong

choices.

Why do we not use our freedom as we should?

Because we rebel against God, and we put ourselves in the place of God.

What help is there for us?

Our help is in God.

How did God first help us?

God first helped us by revealing himself and his will, through nature and history, through many seers and saints, and especially the prophets of Israel.

From the *Book of Common Prayer* 1979, p. 845.



MANNA FOOD CENTER

Chrissy de Fontenay and Ben Ivins take items to Manna Food Center every week. Please remember to bring food for the basket at the altar. This is a spiritual practice that keeps our baptismal promise active. **Protein items are especially needed.** All items must be non-perishable.

THE REDEEMER MEN’S THIRD FRIDAY LUNCHEON GROUP

The Redeemer Lunch Group has returned to in-person gathering at the Irish Inn at Glen Echo. The group discusses whatever is on their collective minds and catches up on how they are all doing. Being older and retired, sometimes the discussion centers on health, other times on household management, sometimes investment philosophies, national politics, the economy, and, of course, life in the parish. A reminder email is sent to all interested persons early in the week we are meeting. If you would like to know more about the group, or be put on the email list, contact Bob Dresser: Robert.dresser@gmail.com

PRAYER During Lent, I always consider Christ's time alone in the wilderness. While I struggle through giving up whatever I'm giving up, I imagine Him being alone and fasting that entire time. I imagine He must have spent an extraordinary amount of time in prayer. This year, I'm wondering what it would be like to be on such a retreat with Jesus, just the two of us for forty days walking, talking, listening, being quiet together, admiring the beauty of nature, giggling at each other's stomach's growling.

That may be the only way I'd ever fulfill Paul's call to pray without ceasing. I'd be constantly conscious of God's immediate presence. Not only would I perceive Him in my soul's spiritual senses, but also in my body's physical senses. And it would be true communion. I would be listening to Him as much as talking and I would hear Him. That's the part of prayer I too often leave out or skimp on or, in some way, get wrong. I doubt what I sense when I listen for God's voice. My own thoughts rush forward in speculation, drowning out God. The cynic in me declares that God is made up. The Bible/Religion student waxes philosophical on predestination, reminding me that it doesn't matter what I do. My rally call when I struggle with my writing is "forward!" There are times when I pray that I recall God telling Moses to stop crying to Him and move forward. Thus, I actually manage to feel guilty for praying. Sheesh.

Reciting prayers helps me move past the voices that distract me. I used to always recite memorized prayers, then I considered it lazy. Now, I see how useful they are, like a well-worn path. While I make my way through these familiar prayers, my mind is relaxed enough to allow and realize God's input. I often find myself suddenly inserting something new and thinking, "I must remember that." Some of those prayers are to be remembered; some have served their purpose and I needn't be disappointed that I forget them.

Prayer in a semi-conscious state tames the many voices that roam and dart around in my mind causing them all to lay down together and make



sense, like in a dream. I don't go there very often. When I emerge from such a prayer I often don't have anything concrete I could verbalize to anyone, but I know what I need to do next. Sometimes it's something disappointing like set the example, when I wanted to hear they were wrong. Sometimes I hear vague lessons like remember how bad this feels; never be the cause of this, rather than you were right.

Prayer in that state is different, to me, from meditation. Meditation is more a clearing of my mind, or a dwelling on a single thought. I stole a line from *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*. "I am one with the Force and the Force is with me." I just change "Force" to "Lord." I repeat this when I have a difficult time focusing or when I'm too crabby to direct my current thoughts to God almighty.

People want to hear stories of miracles. What is miraculous to one may not seem so to another, but I'll share one of my favorite prayer stories with you. I used to teach piano and I had students who were with me for years. One day I decided to diligently pray for them. The next week their lessons took a turn. Students who had long plateaued suddenly surged forward, students who could not memorize a piece or get a particular rhythm succeeded, and students who preferred sight reading to practice were coming to lesson prepared. Wow. Now, had this happened to a few, the

continued over

**LITURGICAL ENLIGHTENMENT:
ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS**

Holy Holy Holy

A new church year calls for a new Sunday liturgy! We'll be using Eucharistic Prayer C, affectionately known as the "Star Wars" Mass. The rector will refrain from saying "The Force be with you" although she will be tempted. The Prayers of the People will be Form V, which includes the confession at the end.

Our opening to worship will use the Trisagion instead of the Gloria. Trisagion means "Three time holy". We say "Holy" to begin each of the first three lines:

*Holy God
Holy and Mighty
Holy Immortal One
Have mercy upon us.*

The Trisagion was sung in Eastern church as an entrance hymn for the clergy. It has been said in Roman, Sarum, German, and British rites in several services. Luther's metrical translation, and consequently Cranmer's spoken one, found itself in burial rites. If not said at a Sunday celebration of Holy Eucharist, you might hear it at a Service of Burial or on Holy Saturday.



Cranmer's translation, in some form, has been in every *Book of Common Prayer*. However, the *Book of Common Prayer 1979*, Rite II, restored the Trisagion to its traditional language structure.

(Hatchett, Marion J. *Commentary on the American Prayer Book*. HarperCollins Publishers, New York, NY, 1995, p. 320.)

PRAYER LAURA ROSE, continued

cynic in me could have rationalized it away as a coincidence. But this happened lesson after lesson, day after day. (I taught around 40 students per week.) I basked in this blessing and stopped praying for them.

A year or so later it occurred to me that prayer had helped once, perhaps it would help again. I started praying for them again and saw the same results. Amazing. One of my students exemplified this lesson. This was a young girl,

about 13, who practiced, but ignored my notes. We were used to working the same things week after week – drudgery – because of this. After this round of prayer, I showed up and she had corrected every mistake from the previous lesson. I turned to her after hearing her play and asked her what she had done differently during the week. "I read your notes and did what you told me to do." She sheepishly answered.

Jesus told us to love and to pray. Maybe instead of doing without we should do something.

I'M NEVER TOTALLY CLEAR ON ADVENT.

Maybe this is because of a childhood marked by the distracting excitement of Christmas, or a focus on upending the strict monotony of boarding school with permission to be a *little* late for “prep” (silent, supervised homework) if one’s Advent Candle was still burning down the day in the dining room. But as a grown musician, I confess, it’s still a little hazy. The time of anticipation and preparation are there—similar to Lent, but with no hair shirt nor ashes. The readings for Advent, and the music that pairs with them lean more towards the Lenten than a Christmassy mood, more about sin and God’s disappointment with Adam and Eve than a baby shower. They herald the start of a journey that we are about to go on, again, another year. Having just recently heard about Christ the King, a.k.a., Jesus the man with his disciples, we experience liturgical whiplash with infant humanity presaged by portentous words: “Signs of endings all around us” indeed. Mortal risk expressed in this immediate and human way simply cuts through so much easier than stories of the clever grown-up running rings round the Pharisees in intellectual debate. Christ the baby, and Mary the heavily pregnant, are important alternative paths to the mystery that is God incarnate.

So we celebrate the last month of the most extraordinary refugee pregnancy, (glossing somewhat over the previous eight). Being *that* pregnant, in a desert, and having to relocate on foot resonates with the harsh realities of our present day migrations and the weaponisation of human suffering. The lectionary gives us a tasting of the prophets who foretold the coming of the Messiah. We experience a last month dash up to Christmas, packing the Old Testament’s foretelling just in time for the answer of the New...it doesn’t seem like quite enough time for the enormity of the situation, but at least it’s not a series of Tweets. And the yin of Advent is an interesting contrast to the the yang of Lent...although Advent seems to fly by...whereas Lent...

So, anyway. If you are planning on coming to Church these four Sundays, you will be preparing the way



of the Lord, you will be making straight in the desert a highway for our God—in a kind of mental infrastructure month. The prophets will ask you to rid yourself of clothing of “sorrow and affliction”... and you to put on “forever the beauty of the glory from God.” And you’d better watch out, and you’d better not cry, because not everyone can “endure the day of his coming,” or even “stand when he appeareth.” He is like a refiner’s fire, and with your help, he’s going to build back better. You will also hear about the man who made Mom’s Organic market cool before it was (locusts and wild honey). And later, you will hear stories that then make sense, of poverty, displacement, and government census, stories that can give us a mirror to our humanity, illustrate hope amid suffering, community amid upheaval and loneliness. Above all, the sweep of the readings illustrate “greatness” again, and what it actually means to be vulnerable and therefore truly powerful. A Happy Christmas indeed.

If however, you are unable to follow the journey with us each week, you will be able to experience **an evening of Advent readings and carols** contained “in little space” with our Choir, compressing the compressed into an hour, on **Sunday, December 5, at 5pm**. Within the service we pair readings with music, taking you on a journey that will help ye prepare the way of the Lord. And afterwards there will be food, in a wonderful reception by FOMAR, but no bugs.

Geoffrey Silver
Director of Music Ministries

VIVI CANTANDO: CONCERT, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 7 P.M.



**“Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change into
something rich and strange.”**

Our program showcases women who are undergoing significant transformative experiences. These metamorphoses—for good or for ill—could be the work of the gods, or a suffering at their own hands, or at those of their enemies. In any case, they are forever changed by these major events.

Our name, *Vivi Cantando*, is derived from “O come sei gentile” found in Monteverdi’s seventh book of Madrigals. The name translated means “live singing.” While we love collaborating with instrumentals, our mission in creating this ensemble was to celebrate the singing arts and to create a true human experience through the sung word. This concert was conceived in 2019 for May 2020, and having been rescheduled for reasons beyond all our control, has more poignancy for everyone now on many levels.

PROGRAM

Flow My Tears, In Darkness let me dwell, John Dowland; *Full Fathom Five*, Robert Johnson; *The fatal hour, Bess of Bedlam, But ere we this perform*, Henry Purcell; A scene from the opera *Jephté*, de Montéclair; with works by the celebrated and rare female composer, Barbara Strozzi, Monteverdi, and Charpentier

PERFORMERS

Julie Bosworth, *Soprano*
Janna Critz, *Mezzo-soprano*
John Moran, *Bass Viola da Gamba*
Cameron Welke, *Theorbo and Renaissance Lute*

*The concert is followed by a festive reception in the Parish Hall. Tickets are available at www.MusicatRedeemer.org
Kids and students go free.*

**RETURN FROM EXILE
WITH GRATITUDE AND HOPE**
Redeemer's annual pledge drive

Pledge Plus

Redeemer faces a very grave financial challenge. We've had a perfect storm that has wiped out our financial reserves, which used to be quite comfortable. We are running a deficit this year, and we won't be able to keep things running next year without a significant increase in contributions. In order to cover this year's deficit and next year's bare-bones budget, we will need an increase in the average commitment of 30%. Many parishioners cannot handle such a large increase, so some of us are doing more than 30%. Please do what you can.

We are not asking you to increase your pledges by this much for all time. Think of it as "Pledge Plus": Your normal pledge (which we hope you would increase over this year's pledge even if there were not a severe situation) plus whatever you can do extra to get us over this financial valley.

We promised complete transparency, so we should tell you that we may need more than the "normal pledges" again next year – but hopefully a lot less extra than this time. Once we get the regular revenue flows going and grow the congregation, the burden should lessen considerably.

Redeemer is our beloved community, but right now we resemble a patient in the Intensive Care Unit. There is a lot of pain. A lot of healing needs to happen. It will only happen if we pull together and support each other, and we have the spirit and love and sense of community that is necessary to get there. We can grow again to being a place of spiritual nourishment, outreach, learning, joy, compassion, sharing and all the other things that are bubbling up as we think about our spiritual and community needs.

As you faithfully consider your "Pledge Plus" for 2022, don't give for what we are today. Give for what we will be. And be a part of creating and implementing that vision.

Thank you, Beloved Community!

Barbara Alterowitz and
David Hoogerheide,
co-chairs of the pledge campaign

VESTRY MEETING NOTES, WEDNESDAY 10/6/21**ON ZOOM 6:30PM**

(Unapproved minutes)

November 17, 2021

Attendance: Marie Caulfield, Toyin Rose, Cricket Park, Katie Nickerson, Geoffrey Platt, Patrick Fitzgerald, Scott Williams, Silvia Heron, Steve Gibson, Tim Yehl.

- Opening prayer by Steve Gibson
- October Meeting minutes
 - Steve asked to have the last sentence of the first bulleted item deleted.

Motion to approve the minutes with corrections was made and seconded. Motion carried.

- Treasurer's report by Steve
 - Steve provided a recap of the financial committee's meeting.
 - He recommends releasing the building fund and emergency fund into the general operating account to replenish the operating account. It will still be close. We're still waiting for the final audit of the insurance money to finish coming back. It may not be in by the end of the year.
 - The finance committee has multiple people doing all the various pieces, but hadn't previously had time to see the big picture all together and how all the pieces fit. Consequently, the refurbished church is beautiful and many maintenance issues had been addressed and decisions had to be made the way they were, but cash was depleted. We need to be very aware of spending until the end of the year and we must have a stewardship evaluation with a good plan moving forward.
 - The amount of pledges doesn't match what we need for the budget. The budget was an aspirational number but was never adjusted when the final pledges were in by the end of the year. Going forward we have to be aware of those disparities.
 - Geoffrey reminded everyone of the people on the committee. Agreed that the discussion was excellent.

Motion to approve the report made and seconded. Motion carried

Motion to approve releasing the building reserve funds and emergency funds to pay bills through the end of the year was made and seconded. Motion carried.

- Warden's report by Geoffrey:
 - Asked for clerical review forms from everyone in the next couple days.
 - Asked the vestry to take the lead by having every vestry member set the example by pledging and increasing pledges if possible so that can be communicated to the congregation.
 - Katie asked if there was a tangible number/goal that we can know and communicate to the congregation, so people know how much to increase their pledges. The answer was 30%. She also asked if there is a way to do automatic deposits for people in order to simplify and streamline donations?
 - Cricket said she and Geoffrey Silver are drafting a letter to those who have helped support the music program in the past to encourage them to support to the church. Also, she relayed a conversation between them about making

the music program about discipleship instead of just music and how to grow that program in numerically and into the mission.

- Steve asked if the tone of the pledge card could be altered. He'd like something softer than "I don't owe a debt to Redeemer." Consistency about language in all the communication. Also, perhaps adding the trusts/bequests makes people think that's an alternative to pledges, so something to clarify would be good.
 - Geoffrey suggested asking the cochairs of the stewardship committee to offer their input.
 - Marie suggested looking at the materials provided by the diocese training in order to be systematic.
 - Katie thinks having a simple pledge card is straightforward and don't complicate it with the planning options. There was universal agreement.
 - Scott offered the website <https://colgate.giftplans.org/>
- Cricket's report:
 - Jo found another quote for the poly-jacking and will provide that 3rd quote when she can. Steve would like that deferred until we have a clearer picture of how to get out of the woods financially. Lots of deferred maintenance has come up, but it's time to consider how much money to put towards all the projects versus how much money we have. And Cricket offered that the work could probably be deferred once we have a quote.
 - She is going to offer a book study by Amy Jo Levine, *Light of the World*, at 7AM on Wednesday mornings and make it available to the community as well as the congregation, in person.
 - Helen has been hired. She's "drinking from a firehose right now." Cricket said she was going to pay her for two hours to come to church (since she has no history with church at all) so she can understand what we are doing and why. Time will tell if she's up to the task, but she's the only qualified person we have right now and she needs some time to try to learn. She works from about 10:30-3:30 and can't work more than 15 hours each week because of limitations of pay.
 - Geoffrey is looking at spending the grant money \$3600 on audio equipment and it needs to be done soon because pricing is rising fast with covid delays. The diocese has chipped in \$10. This is directly for those who are hard of hearing and it allows us to adjust various microphones better. Originally we asked for \$16 and they approved \$10.
 - Motion made and seconded to use the grant money to purchase the initial audio equipment from grant funds. Motion carried.
- Budgeting and pledge drive:
 - Cricket appreciated the financial meeting because it was so clear that everyone understood it costs \$4500 per month to run the church, most churches our size don't have more than one full time staff member. If the choice is to have both a full time rector and music director then we have to grow and people have to understand the financial commitment is ongoing and requires a plan as well as a plan to let the congregation know/understand the weightiness of the situation.
 - The two budgets (one with raises and one without). \$53k in the hole of \$60k in the hole if we assume pledging remains the same as last year.
 - Geoffrey said the finance committee will meet one more time after the pledges

- come in to offer recommendations and determine the budget.
- Steve recommended a meeting to explain the finances from the treasures report. He thinks it should be published in the spirit first and then have a meeting with those interested in order to discuss the possible options going forward. Spirit goes out November 30th. Early December is the proposed sit down meeting. It's possible that having this meeting before people make their pledges so additional support can be provided if people choose. There was agreement on this idea. Steve says ideas need to be presented other than simply getting more pledges (such as staffing adjustments).
- Inquiry groups are being polled this week. Marie reminded the group that the stewardship team is working hard, and it isn't the vestry's work to come up with additional plans right now. Katie reminded everyone that it is the vestry's job to approve the budget when the time comes, which is why it's helpful to have good solid information.
- Cricket will talk with the cochairs to communicate the pertinent pieces of this discussion.
- Marie asked for a corrected report since there are some mistakes in some of the formulas.
- Katie said she would like to listen in to the meetings regarding finances since the vestry has to make the ultimate decisions.
- We need to add \$54k in pledges to balance the budget. Steve says we have to start there in communications, which is a 30% average increase in order to balance the budget. Emphasizing that this is required to balance the budget. And that there are not funds in the bank to accommodate an overdrawn budget again.
- The goal for 2022 in order to balance the budget is \$512k. (\$475k in pledges)
- Cricket says she will talk to Margaret and get the updated info to the team by Friday.
- Universal appreciation expressed for the current financial committee.
- New business: what is the plan to make the plan?
 - Cricket proposes a retreat in January. Including new vestry. January 16th is the date for the annual meeting (January 23rd as a weather date). The Vestry retreat should be the 28th and 29th of January or the 4th and 5th of February. We need to hire a third-party facilitator.
 - Need to find 3 new vestry members
 - Jo is willing to step in as senior warden.
 - Silvia is willing to step into the junior warden role.
- Cricket prayed to conclude.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Casey, seminarian
Acting Secretary

Church of the Redeemer's financial results through October 31, 2021 are set forth in the adjoining table. Pledge income was budgeted for 2021 at the original budget planning number, but actual pledges turned out to be substantially lower. This gap is reflected in pledge income, which is \$51,864 below budget year-to-date. Total expenses are running close to budget, resulting in an operating deficit of \$48,714 as of the end of October.

Income and expenses related to flood recovery and building improvements are accounted for separately from the profit and loss statement. A summary of Recovery & Renewal expense and income is set forth at the bottom of the P&L. This account has an accumulated negative balance for 2020 and 2021 of \$80,727, which has been funded out of operating cash.

As shown in the statement of cash position, Redeemer had \$125,863 on hand as of the end of

October. Operating cash available after set-aside of designated and restricted funds was negative \$15,008, which is in effect "borrowed" from the pool of set aside funds. The Vestry has voted to release the Emergency Fund and the remaining Building Reserve into the operating account to help meet expenses for the remainder of the year. Even with these transfers, the operating account potentially could be negative again by year end, depending on income and expenses during November and December. Redeemer is still awaiting a final insurance payment, although it is unclear when this will be received.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this year-to-date report or about Redeemer finances in general.

Stephen L. Gibson
Treasurer

Redeemer Profit and Loss Statement - August 31, 2021	Jan. - Aug. Actual	Jan. - Aug. Budget	Jan. - Aug. Over (Under) Budget	Annual Budget
INCOME				
2021 Pledge Payments	302,382	351,960	(49,578)	476,500
2021 Over Pledge	3,185	10,000	(6,815)	15,000
2021 Non-Pledge	14,828	16,667	(1,839)	25,000
2020 Pledges	5,982	667	5,315	1,000
Loose Plate Offering	1,009		1,009	
Special Offerings	10	667	(657)	1,000
Event & Activity Income	0	0	0	0
Facilities Use	0	3,333	(3,333)	5,000
Other Income	7,412	4,000	3,412	6,000
Total Income	334,807	387,293	(52,486)	529,500
EXPENSE				
Administration Expense	36,107	35,200	907	52,800
Diocesan Giving	26,667	26,667	(0)	40,000
Discretionary Account	400	333	67	500
Maintenance Expense	62,258	53,667	8,591	80,500
Personnel Expense	199,227	200,471	(1,245)	300,707
Program Expense	8,045	15,100	(7,055)	22,650
Property Expense	31,168	31,333	(165)	47,000
Total Expense	363,872	362,771	1,100	544,157
Net Operating Income	(29,064)	24,522	(53,586)	(14,657)

DECEMBER 2021 TREASURER'S REPORT

Redeemer Profit and Loss Statement - October 31, 2021	Jan.- Oct. Actual	Jan.-Oct. Budget	Jan.-Oct. Over (Under) Budget	Annual Budget
Music - General	2,696	4,167	(1,470)	5,000
Newcomers/Membership	0	83	(83)	100
Other/Governance	965	833	132	1,000
Stewardship	0	250	(250)	300
Special Events	0	1,250	(1,250)	1,500
Worship	3,104	2,500	604	3,000
Youth	0	208	(208)	250
Property Expense	38,960	39,167	(206)	47,000
Mortgage Interest Expense	11,799	19,583	(7,784)	23,500
Mortgage Principal Payments	27,161	19,583	7,578	23,500
Total Expense	449,111	453,464	(4,354)	544,157
Net Operating Income	(48,714)	4,932	(53,646)	(14,657)

Cash Position

Cash on Hand 10/31/21

Checking Account	41,631
Uncleared Transactions	(7,055)
Brokerage Account	89,405
Savings Account	1,881

Total Cash 125,863

Less Designated Funds

Music Series	3,730
Sabbatical Reserve	7,700
Emergency Fund	22,821
Rector's Discretionary Fund	1,139

Less Restricted Funds

Building Reserve	15,254
Building and Grounds	0
Flowers	5,463
FOMAR Donations	19,583
Columbarium Maintenance	7,313
Other Restricted	2,971
Outreach	0
PRAY Youth Program	19,279
Prepaid Pledges	32,000
Regional Dean Fund	3,618

Operating Cash Available (15,008)

Recovery & Renewal

10/31/21

FUNDING	2020	YTD 2021	Total
Building Reserve	71,627	38,000	109,627
Kassia Concert Donations	0	4,409	4,409
Special Donations	51,133	3,000	54,133
Insurance Proceeds	259,109	20,178	279,287
Total Funding	381,869	65,587	447,456
EXPENSE			
Elevator	59,431	58,697	118,128
HVAC Replacement	11,250	16,345	27,595
Interior	9,736	11,630	21,366
Kitchen	10,500	40,229	50,729
Outside Drainage	14,400	0	14,400
Rectory Bathroom	0	47,338	47,338
Flood Recover	203,285	45,341	248,626
Total Expense	308,602	219,580	528,182
Net cash effect	73,267	(153,993)	(80,727)

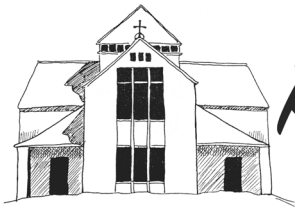
BIRTHDAYS

- Diana Daley
- Tyler Packard-Winkler
- Vicky Bocock
- Susan Cinkala
- Lily McGurrin
- Charley Gibson
- Marylin Johnson Raisch
- Amy Yount
- Jochen Kraske
- Clara Tomlinson
- Finley Tomlinson
- Nico Judge
- Evan Judge
- Justin Arrington
- Lou Garo
- Ellen Jimerson
- Sam Nickerson
- Charles Oliver
- Julia Rychlik

ANNIVERSARIES

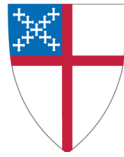
- Sarah Nelson & Evan McGurrin





The Episcopal Church Welcomes You

Redeemer Bethesda



For COVID-safety reasons, the Parish Office is open by appointment. Please contact individual staff members for appointments.

As Sunday is a work day for staff, please avoid contacting staff members by phone on Mondays unless it's an emergency.

PARISH CLERGY & STAFF

The Rev'd Cricket Park, Rector
rector@redeemberbethesda.org

The Rev'd Dr. David Schlafer, Assisting Priest
drdavidjschlafer@gmail.com

The Rev'd Adrienne Clamp, MD, Deacon
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Becki Casey, Seminarian
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Geoffrey Silver, Director of Music Ministries
music@redeemberbethesda.org

Margaret Church, Bookkeeper
accounting@redeemberbethesda.org

Parish Office Mailbox
office@redeemberbethesda.org

VESTRY & OFFICERS

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Jo Barclay-Beard, Junior Warden
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Scott Williams
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Tim Yehl
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Welcome to The Episcopal Church of the Redeemer in Bethesda, Maryland, a parish community of “inquiring and discerning hearts”, where you are invited to join us in living and wrestling with difficult questions. We value an Anglican spirituality - one that is open to the mystery of the Holy and that celebrates the beauty of creation and upholds the dignity of every human being.

Redeemer is known for beautiful, reverent worship, excellence in preaching and music, and active outreach ministries to its neighbors.

Redeemer's local outreach ministries include support of a Manna Food Pantry, literacy through tutoring at a Silver Spring elementary school, sponsoring blood donation drives, and singing for persons who are ill or shut in.

No matter who you are or where you find yourself on the journey of faith, you are welcome here at Redeemer. We look forward to greeting you!

The Episcopal Church of the Redeemer
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Bethesda, Maryland 20816
301-229-3770
www.redeemberbethesda.org