

# THE REDEEMER RECORD

Vol. 116, No. 4

April 2021



## LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

Rev. James Erlandson, Pastor

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Tahnea Brown, Office Manager

## Pastor's Letter from Home

*"Seed that on earth is dying rises to bear much fruit. Christ, as we meet at your table, give us the bread of life. Lord, we do thank and adore you! Unceasing praise of the ages rises from night and death." (ELW hymn #330)*

Dear friends in Christ,

In this hymn that we have been singing throughout Lent as our offering response, we recognize how it is only when a seed falls into the earth and dies, that it sprouts, grows and bears fruit. Jesus said this himself in John's gospel. So we look forward to spring, and rejoice with the first seeds that sprout and grow in our yards. We make this connection with Jesus' resurrection on Easter, as he foretold how a seed dies, then rises again to grow and live. So Jesus died on a cross, was buried, and by God's miracle, was raised to life again. This is the promise that also gives us hope, for in the days surrounded by so much death, we look forward to new life.

We have been living through this Covid pandemic for over a year, separated like seeds stored in the granaries of our homes, connected only in cyberspace by our telephones, computers or in chance, distanced meetings. But as we enter Holy Week and walk with Jesus in his journey to the cross, we also hear the promise which accompanies this way of the cross. It is the call of the gospel with the good news of Jesus' rising on Easter, when the tomb was found empty, and the women came running to tell the disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead!

So we look forward to safely coming out of this pandemic, cautiously, as we receive vaccinations and continue to wear masks, wash hands and keep safe distance. But we can hear the promise of new life, and are buoyed in the hope that in future months we can take small steps towards being together. Yes, we will gather, but on Zoom online for Holy Week and Easter worship - but many of us can be with our immediate families this Easter, which gives us joy! We have hope that in another month or two, many more will be vaccinated, and perhaps by summer, we can begin to worship together in some way. Maybe outside, maybe still separated, maybe some will stay online with video-streaming. But we can see a future together, and so we rejoice. So we sing:

*"Now the green blade rises from the buried grain, wheat that in dark earth many days has been; love lives again, that with the dead has been; love is come again like wheat arising green." (ELW #379)*  
Christ is risen!

*Pastor Jim Erlandson*



## Worship Schedule for Holy Week, ALL ON ZOOM:

### Holy Week

- Maundy Thursday, April 1 at 7:00 pm handwashing and Holy Eucharist
- Good Friday, April 2 at 7:00 pm
- Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday, April 3, at 7:00 pm (scripture readings and prayers only, no music)
- Easter Sunday, April 4, at 10 am Festival Eucharist on the Resurrection of our Lord



#### **MARKLEY Irene Grace (Rehling)**

Age 72, of Saint Paul, passed peacefully March 19, 2021. Preceded in death by parents, Robert and Lois Rehling (Graham).

Irene cherished childhood summers with family at Cass Lake. At St. Cloud State University she made many lifelong friends. Irene dedicated her career to education and earned a Master's Degree at the University of St. Thomas. She taught business administration and typing for 30 years at Monticello HS.

She enjoyed spending time with her family and made wonderful memories traveling, visiting museums, historical sites, and nearly every baseball stadium.

In retirement, she enjoyed exploring the world, playing bridge, theater, and volunteering. She treasured time with her granddaughter, Lila. An active member of the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Irene participated in Loaves & Fishes, ISALAH, and Project Home.

Irene is deeply missed by her son David (Beth), granddaughter Lila, sister Barbara Senneseth (Dennis), niece Erika (George), nephew Alex, sister-in-law Dianne, and a special group of friends. A service will be held at a later date. Memorials preferred to: Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, 285 No. Dale St., St. Paul, MN 55103. Love of family and compassion for humanity were joys in life. Irene was a selfless, caring, and warm spirit who impacted all with her kindness and philanthropy.

Dear Friends in Christ,

I regret to bear the sad news that our sister in Christ, Irene Markley, died last Friday, March 19, at home at Global Pointe, Golden Valley, MN. I was privileged to be with her a couple of weeks ago, to read scripture and pray with her, when she was aware of my presence. She even said some of the words along to the 23rd Psalm and the Lord's Prayer as we prayed together.

Irene is survived by her son David Markley, also her sister Barb Senneseth. Irene was a good friend to many of us, very active in worship and leadership at Redeemer.

We will miss her terribly (we already do). She has been such a caring person in our community. She was very active as a leader in ISALAH with our core team, a volunteer with Project Home, a scripture reader in worship, Altar Guild member (preparing the altar for the sacraments), she served on the Vestry and did Payroll service for us for three years. She was passionate about social justice and racial equity, being one who came forward whenever racial injustice in the community, state or nation came up.

We hope to be honored to remember her in a memorial service or public service - which we may be able to do in person later, by June if not before, when most people have been vaccinated. Memorials can be written for and sent to Lutheran Church of the Redeemer. Again, we miss her and may she rest in peace.

## APRIL SCRIPTURES & READERS

We invite members and friends of Redeemer to read the appointed scriptures for each Sunday. This is a meaningful way to prepare for worship. It also binds us to our homebound sisters and brothers who we also encourage to read the same scriptures weekly.

<b>April 4</b>	Stephanie Stoessel
<b>April 11</b>	Lyle Nelson
<b>April 18</b>	Diana Rankin
<b>April 25</b>	Benjamin Cretsinger



	<b>First Reading</b>	<b>Psalm</b>	<b>Second Reading</b>	<b>Gospel</b>
<b>April 4</b> <i>Easter</i>	Acts 10:34-43 or Isa 25:6-9	Ps 118:1-2, 14-24	1 Cor 15:1-11 or Acts 10:34-43	Mark 16:1-8 or John 20:1-18
<b>April 11</b> <i>2 Easter</i>	Acts 4:32-35	Ps 133	1 John 1:1—2:2	John 20:19-31
<b>April 18</b> <i>3 Easter</i>	Acts 3:12-19	Ps 4	1 John 3:1-7	Luke 24:36b-48
<b>April 25</b> <i>4 Easter</i>	Acts 4:5-12	Ps 23	1 John 3:16-24	John 10:11-18

## **Thrivent Action Team Project: You Are Not Forgotten This Holy Week and Easter**

On Saturday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, 10 members delivered Regier begonias, an Easter card, and the prayers and lessons for Holy Week and Easter to 18 other members who have not been able to join us for worship on Zoom, have been ill, or are living in a care center. It is hard to believe that this is the second Holy Week and Easter that we have not been able to gather in person at this holiest of times in the church year because of the coronavirus pandemic. We wanted to assure these special 18 individuals that they were not forgotten amidst all the changes we have had to make as a congregation.

Like our Christmas poinsettia project, we submitted a proposal to Thrivent Financial, requesting a \$250 gift card to purchase the begonias. We created an Easter card and printed booklets with all of the readings and prayers for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter so that they could be read at home.

Many thanks to Marie and Isaiah, Ruth, Bonnie, Lyle and Myrna, Joy, Pastor Jim, Margaret, and Michelle for delivering the plants; Michelle for organizing the volunteers; and Tahnea Brown for her computer skills. Diana submitted the proposal to Thrivent.

This is the image that was used on our Easter card. The lilies were planted by Kim Tann at the church in 1999. Horticulturists say that Easter lilies will not grow and bloom in our gardens, but Kim has proved them wrong.



*Photo by Diana M. Rankin*

## CORE TEAM NEWS

As this newsletter goes out, the State Legislature will be on recess. They will return after Easter to finish the work for this session. If the pattern of past years continues, there will be a lot of putting the final versions of the budget and other legislative actions off until the very end of the session in mid-May. Legislative proposals that seemed to be left out may come back into play as points of negotiation.

As is the case in most states in the US, there is a push in the Minnesota legislature to reconsider Voter ID requirements. Many years ago, these same requirements were put to the state as a constitutional amendment and voters throughout Minnesota said no. These requirements are presented as a needed protection against voter fraud. However, repeated audits of voting operations have found only a very small percentage of potentially fraudulent votes (<1%). The only type of fraud the Voter ID proposal would prevent is impersonation – which is not happening. Instead, this legislation would make it harder for a number of people to vote by requiring them to present state-issued identification with name, picture, and current address. Most people have state identification; that's not the issue. The issue is the current address requirement. People living in poverty move a lot ... and they would have to pay the fee to update the ID Card ... and have the time to go to the requisite office to obtain the new card ... every time they move. Although it is true many food shelves do require a photo ID, that is only to put the name with the face. Clients are also asked to show proof of address in the form of utility bill or lease (and this is because most food shelves around here have geographically defined service areas). We said "no" to this before. We are needed to say "NO" this again.



If we learned nothing from this time of pandemic, it's that people need the financial wherewithal to take time off when they are sick or they need to care for family members. The state house has put forth a plan to develop a state pool similar to unemployment to provide income support to workers who need to use the Family and/or Medical Leave time guaranteed by the federal FMLA policy enacted decades ago. Only the time off is guaranteed; continuation of income during that time is not. A state pool would make it possible for small businesses to pay their employees when they need to take this leave. There is also a proposal to make Earned Sick and Safe Time a state-wide requirement for employers so that all employees can afford to stay home when they are sick. At this point, these proposals have not been able to get a hearing in the senate.

ISAIHAH is organizing virtual, district-level meetings with state senators, representatives, and city council members. If you're not currently getting emails about these events, let Stephanie Stoessel know of your interest.



Our Church Vestry was opened by Sybil on March 9, 2021 on zoom with prayer. Pastor Jim said that he expects we will continue to worship on Zoom into summer, even as more and more members are being vaccinated. We want to continue live streaming of worship after physical worship is possible. Planning for Holy Week and Easter is ongoing. Pastor Jim and ISIAH continue to press for driver's license for all and paid family leave at the Legislature. And Pastor Jim and Pastor Joanne are supporting AMMPARO, Sanctuary, and anti-racism ministry within the St Paul Area Synod. Links to Zoom services can be found by search of Lutheran Church of the Redeemer on YouTube.

The Future Committee continues its discussions with other groups interested in sharing space at Redeemer for social justice ministry, including Neighborhood Development Center, St Paul, Incarnation Lutheran Church, Shoreview, and Saint Paul Area Synod. Contact with agencies who would occupy more space has been made. Discussion about renovating the kitchen for food ministry is being discussed.

Project Home will lease a space long term for homeless families. Ruth thanked volunteers for their support.

The Vestry's visioning this month was about getting ready to return to physical worship after more than a year on zoom. What will be different? What did we learn from being on zoom?

**The next Vestry meeting is planned for Apr 13, 2021.**

## **FOCUS ON OUR FUTURE:**

***What Seems to Be Happening? What Possibilities Do We Face?  
What Are We Going to Do About It? ... and most of all:  
What is God up to in this?***

Rev. Trudy K. Cretsinger, Theologian in Residence

Pastor Jim recently mentioned Rodney Stark's book, *The Rise of Christianity*, which discusses the impact of plagues on the growth of the early Church. Then, as now, the wealthy and elite could use their resources and status to avoid the contagion (mostly by going to their country estates well-removed from the cities). The Christians, being primarily composed of the poor and lower classes, didn't have that option. Furthermore, they not only stayed in their communities, they took care of the ill. These demonstrations of love-in-action made a difference in their communities – and what people thought of these people who called themselves Christians.

As the vaccines are distributed and we look forward to the diminishment of the current pandemic, what will the legacy of Christians and their churches be in this time? Here at Redeemer, we have scrupulously followed the guidance from the health department, our bishop, and the synod office to continue our work in ways that minimize exposure risks to ourselves and others. Much as we miss our worship space and the physical presence of one another, we also recognize the real risks and have been doing our part to adjust, adapt, and navigate the hazards in ways to keep us all as safe as possible.

However, this has not been the case of all facets of Christianity. In some communities, the pandemic has been dismissed as a hoax and freedom of religion has been cited as an excuse to defy CDC guidance. Mega-churches have been sources of super-spreader events not just in their own congregations but in public rallies and worship tours. Will the term Christian be associated with this flagrant carelessness in the aftermath? After the plagues during the reigns of Marcus Aurelius and Cyprian in Rome, Christians were noted for the way they loved and cared. What will Christians be associated with after our current plague?

There are very few things we can direct in whatever perception develops as we make our way out of this COVID-19 Pandemic. Diana Butler Bass suggests that "quiet churches" (small congregations that don't attract attention like mega-churches do) like Redeemer can tell the story of what we did: how we followed the guidelines for the good of our neighbors, how we found ways to show care despite the need for physical distancing, things we learned to do that we would never have imagined doing, how we persisted because we care about one another and for our worship life, how we show our love for God through loving care of the neighbor.

The plagues of the Roman eras sparked some form of religious revival. Could the pandemic spark one in our time? Maybe. If it does, what story will we tell to curious inquirers?

***Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to the stranger ~  
Romans 12:12-13***

## **Bishop Eaton issues statement on gun violence**

*3/26/2021 2:45:00 PM*

*He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed (1 Peter 2:24).*

Dear church,

As a nation we have lived through a very difficult two weeks following the mass shootings in Atlanta on March 16 and again in Boulder, Colo., on March 22. The shooting in Colorado was only the most recent of [104 mass shootings](#) already in 2021. Colorado has a painful history of mass shootings. Since 1993 the deadliest incidents have been the 1999 Columbine High School massacre, the mass shooting in a movie theater in Aurora and now the 10 lives taken, including the life of a responding police officer, at a supermarket in Boulder.

Together with God, we grieve with the families and communities impacted by gun violence — especially in communities where it is an everyday occurrence. These shootings are not isolated but rather a pattern of the gun violence crisis in the United States. The numbers of victims tell only a part of the pain — the trauma caused by gun violence ripples across family members, friends, neighborhoods, communities and this country.

As we near the Sunday of the Passion, we enter into the suffering of Christ and into solidarity with the sufferings of the world. As we look to the healing power of the cross, we celebrate the gift of peace through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As followers of Jesus, we are empowered to take up the challenge to prevent violence and grapple with the complex causes that make violence so pervasive.

The ELCA is a church in society [striving for peace](#) in all the world. Let us join with others in calling for greater gun safety, including preventing easy access to assault-style weapons and strengthening our federal system of background checks for all gun sales. We call for support and protection for those living out their vocations to protect and defend society, enforce the law and work toward restorative justice. We pray for rostered ministers who provide support and counseling services to those affected by gun-violence-related crimes even as we pray for the perpetrators of violent acts. We call upon congregations to hold safe space for those dealing with the fears and threats related to violence in all its manifestations.

In Christ,  
The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

## **On Church Finances and Other Plagues**

*Bob Paddock: Church Treasurer*

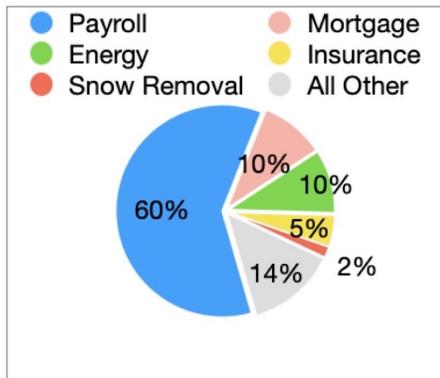
"*Whan that Aprill, with his shoures soote...*" as the first lines of Geoffrey Chaucer's famous ***Canterbury Tales*** begin, I can only respond with, 'Amen!' With the arrival of the month of April, we can now hopefully look forward to rain rather than snow here in St. Paul. I know not how other feel, but that thought puts a smile on my aging face.

Over the course of these past months (indeed this past year), our lives have been subjected to a variety of negative events, all of which we individually bear with varying degrees of difficulty - virus, riots, killings, shortages, job-loss, political upheaval, anarchy, winter. I feel like the vanquished wrestler, down on the mat and crying 'Uncle', simply wanting an end to it all.

For those of us in the Christian tradition of the western churches, the arrival of Easter on April 4th of this year means that our day of deliverance has come. It marks the defeat of death and the hope of salvation. Of course, this grand event doesn't directly address the issue of the Corona virus and daily woes that afflict our lives, but it does remind us that there is light at the end of the tunnel in even the worst of things. I shall, however, leave the discussion of that element to members of the clergy.

Now that I've sat here wringing my gnarled hands, setting the stage for woe, I will say that, "*Hey! Things are not all that bad, financially for the congregation.*" We continue to keep our heads above water, paying our bills on time. Expenses for this past month were higher than our giving, but what else is new? Hopefully the weather will remain relatively mild, thus keeping our heating bills down. Our last Xcel Energy bill was just over \$4,000 in spite of the fact that we, as a congregation, are not yet in the building. We also just paid the last of the snow removal bills. So, April ought to bring us some financial relief, providing our congregation continues to come forth with regular offerings to help pay for what does arrive. I am thankful for that giving, for it lets me sleep at night with a bit more ease.

In an effort to keep the congregation informed of finances, I want to show you generally what our largest expenses look like as part of the overall budget. Our biggest single expenses are payroll, mortgage, energy, insurance and snow removal. All other expenses I grouped together in one lump. The accompanying chart varies by month, of course, with energy playing a bigger role during the winter. These are expenses over which we have little control. We can't reduce the energy bill by very much, unless we turn the heat down to say 50 degrees. Spoiled as we are, we wouldn't do that at home, so why at church? Our insurance expenses are an annual policy. Again, we can't reduce there either. Payroll could be reduced if we asked our staff to work at half time. I say good luck with that! That leaves the mortgage. I intend to discuss that element in more depth in the future, for it is an item of interest to some members of the congregation. But let me just say that at this point 83% of our current mortgage payment goes towards the principal, and that percent increases each month. It will be fully paid off in less than four years.



Now, I do want to say that, by my very nature, I am somewhat of an optimist. Others are more pessimistic, and a few could truly be labeled as realist. So, I tend to take a rosy view on things. However, I could not but help notice that financial giving (as generous as it is) has been waning over time. Those few microscopic genes of realism in me have been jumping all around like the proverbial 'Mexican jumping bean', waving their little nucleotides in agitation to get

my attention. I, therefore, have concerns over the long-term viability of our financial state. Perhaps things will change as we finally get back into our beloved building, but I am paying more attention to what seems to be this general trend. I urge my fellow congregants to continue sending in your weekly or monthly offering. It truly is needed and does help to keep us financially healthy. Our expenses are truly kept to a minimum.

So, that's all I have to say at this juncture. If any of you have questions about finances here at church, I am all ears. I want to keep the congregation informed, but I don't really know what I ought to be telling you. This monthly column is my attempt to do so!

Yours in Christ  
BOB

### FAREWELL & GODSPEED

We bid farewell and Godspeed to David Tannen and Trudy Cretsinger, who are moving on April 5 to Albuquerque, New Mexico, to live closer to their families. David has been our faithful Zoom host and treasurer. Trudy has been our intern pastor during seminary, and in recent years, our Resident Theologian. We treasure our friendship with them as part of our church family, and their children, Catalina (now a teacher in Albuquerque) and Benjamin (who remains to live and work in Minnesota). They will drive to Albuquerque the day after Easter. Though we are sad to see them go, we rejoice with them in this new chapter in their lives. In the near future we will continue to see them on Sundays as part of Zoom worship.

**You are invited to join in a time to say "farewell and Godspeed" on Sunday, April 4, between 2:30 - 4:30 pm at Redeemer (outside, weather permitting).** Come for a safely-distanced time for well-wishes (no tangible gifts, please - their moving trucks and car are packed and full!). We will have a short service of prayer outside between **3:00 - 3:30 pm**. You are also invited to ring tower bells for Easter!

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