

THE REDEEMER RECORD

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May 2021



LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

Rev. James Erlandson, Pastor

285 North Dale Street, St. Paul, MN 55103

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Tahnea Brown, Office Manager

Pastor's Letter from Home

"Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is." 1 John 3:1-7

Dear friends,

In one of the beloved letters in the New Testament, the First Letter of John to the Church, we receive encouragement from Christians two thousand years ago for our lives today. From a year of struggle and global pandemic, separated from each other without public, in-person worship, we finally see "light at the end of the tunnel". With many of us already being vaccinated against Covid-19, we now have a goal of gathering for in-person worship in June. We are grateful for the many who have kept the faith, preparing and recording hymns for worship, and hosting us for Zoom worship every Sunday (and many Wednesday evenings). Thanks to Tahnea Brown, our office manager, for keeping us connected with communications and for preparing our service sheets each Sunday and for Holy Week. It has been a year to remember!

We have a goal of in-person worship in early June. We have already scheduled one funeral for early May, and five Narcotics Anonymous support groups and Praise Covenant International Church are already gathering weekly. For us to gather, we also will have to follow MDH guidelines. So...

We need help in order to prepare to gather for worship in June:

- *Dusting the pews and vacuuming the center aisle carpet in the Sanctuary;

- *Cleaning the kitchen countertops and removing expired food from freezers;

- *Spot-cleaning floors and other spaces to prepare for worship gatherings;

- *Help with outdoor grounds clean-up;

- *Cleaning the Sacristy and communion vessels, and putting vestments back on the altar, replacing banners and candelabras. All should be done in May!

We are purchasing video and audio recording equipment in order to livestream our worship services once we start in-person worship. We appreciate all donations towards this purpose of preparing for worship.

Pastor Jim Erlandson

MAY 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.

May 2	Benjamin Cretsinger
May 9	Bonnie Hughes
May 16	Elizabeth Currie
May 23	Chris Avery
May 30	Eloise Paddock

	First Reading	Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel
May 2	Acts 8:26-40	Ps 22:25-31	1 John 4:7-21	John 15:1-8
May 9	Acts 10:44-48	Ps 98	1 John 5:1-6	John 15:9-17
May 16	Acts 1:1-11	Ps 47 or Ps 93	Eph 1:15-23	Luke 24:44-53
May 23	Acts 2:1-21 <i>or</i> Ezek 37:1-14	Ps 104:24-34, 35b	Rom 8:22-27 <i>or</i> Acts 2:1-21	John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15
May 30	Isa 6:1-8	Ps 29	Rom 8:12-17	John 3:1-17

Ascension Thursday Joint Eucharist

Thursday, May 13, 2021 at 6 PM

Bethlehem Lutheran (436 Roy St N)

Please join Bethlehem, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, and St. Paul-Reformation for the first of several summer outdoor joint liturgies. Please bring a lawn chair and a mask, and join us for this distanced and safe eucharist. We will gather on the lawn facing Roy Street, and parking is available near the Church or the parish parking lot. See you there !

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

Church historian and writer Diana Butler Bass has been on tour lately to talk about her new book. I doubt it's all that surprising to anyone, that during question-and-answer times with the audience, she is often asked questions about the post-pandemic church. What's going to happen after the pandemic? That's a question on a lot of minds in a lot of areas today – including church members thinking about their congregations.

Two things she has realized (and most of us should as well): First, no one can know the future – period. Second, while we as humans experience time in terms of events and chronology, God's understanding of time is very different. We cannot know for certain what church life will be like once the pandemic has ebbed and we are able to gather again ... in person ... without masks ... and worship together in the same physical space again.

There is grief and lament for what – for whom – has been lost. However, as Ms. Bass notes, the word *lost* doesn't just mean dead or gone; it can also mean *misplaced*, *out of place*, or *dislocated*. Those kinds of words certainly apply as we make our way out of this pandemic.

We've lost our sense of time as too many things that helped us note one day from another were lost as we stayed at home so much of the time day after day after day. We've lost a sense that our individual stories are connected with a larger, communal story. We've lost that sense of connectedness that comes from being in the same physical space with others. We've also lost the practice of face-to-face interactions in our relationships. How will it really feel to be around other people and not have to wear masks ... to see a whole face ... to talk without layers of fabric over our mouths?

We can't know what form the future will take, when we'll be able to drop the masks and just be together again. However, Ms. Bass suggests that faith communities will have a vital role to play in this reconnecting. The suspected Latin roots of our word *religion* suggest binding or reconnecting, mending what has been broken.

We know the pandemic has broken our world, broken life as we knew it. What will it mean for us a faith community to be part of putting things back together again – not just in our congregational life, but as part of a larger community that will be struggling with this time of transition?

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" ~ John 10:10

OUR ANNUAL
STEPS to
Success

is
going

VIRTUAL

this
year

With
T. Mychael
Rambo!

MAY 18th
Starts 6:30 p.m.



Join us for an evening of virtual storytelling & entertainment – all are welcome!

EVENT DATE:
Tuesday, May 18, 2021

TIME:
6:30 p.m. Happy Half-Hour
7:00–7:45 Virtual Show,
T. Mychael Rambo, Host

PLACE:
Online...in the comfort
of your own home!

FREE TO ATTEND
BUT MUST RSVP

For more info go to
www.Daily-Work.org
or call (651) 204-3043

This year's Steps to Success benefit honors our collective strength and resiliency with inspiring stories from the Daily Work community.

Hosted by award-winning actor, vocalist, arts educator and community contributor T. Mychael Rambo – known for his baritone voice and principal roles on the stages of every major Twin Cities theater, Carnegie Hall, and venues in Africa, Europe and South America.

“I'm inspired by Daily Work's efforts to provide a safe space for folks seeking an uplift. They are a place that offers job search assistance, life coaching, and other resources that any of us might need, deserve, and appreciate during the daunting task of finding good work. – T. Mychael Rambo”

RSVP at steps-to-success-registration.eventbrite.com or return the enclosed card. We will provide you with a link to watch the event on your web-enabled computer or device. Just click and view!

Daily Work

CORE TEAM NEWS

Along with the Twin Cities and Minnesota, much of the US (if not the world) was holding a collective breath as the jury for the trial of Derick Chauvin deliberated the evidence and the charges. The sense of relief when verdicts of guilty were announced on all counts was palpable. At long last, in this instance, justice was served. The verdict cannot restore the life of George Floyd; however, it does proclaim loud and clear: what then-Officer Chauvin did to Mr. Floyd was wrong, criminally wrong.

While this is a step in a better direction, it is only one step. The awful truth in this case is that events should never have come to this point. Despite noted problems in his performance as a police officer, Derick Chauvin was not only allowed to continue to wear the badge, but he was also made a training officer, a role model for newer officers. The police department actually wanted more officers to be like him. That points to the very reason systemic change is needed. A correct verdict from a jury now and then will not fix this. What is needed is a police department that reflects and responds to the concerns of people in the community, that empowers the many good officers to step forward, lead, and stand up to those who consider Chauvin a role model.

Such changes can't happen in a moment ... or even 9-10 minutes. Changes in policies, procedures, and attitudes are needed. Some of this will require action from the Minnesota State Legislature, now in the final weeks of the session. Some changes may require action at the federal level. Your voice can make a difference with our elected leaders. Know where your representatives, both in the state and national legislative bodies, stand on these issues. Thank them for taking positions you support and tell them how you want to be represented on issues that are important to you.

As the 2021 Legislative Session heads into its closing weeks, there are a number of issues to be resolved. ISAI AH is planning a variety of actions from old-school literature drops in key areas (no physical contact required!) to phone banking in order to raise awareness and public support for policies that will create the kind of community we want to live in: an inclusive community where everyone is valued and a caring economy that allows everyone to thrive. If there are issues you care about, make your concerns known to the Core Team. We'll make sure you have an opportunity to participate in upcoming actions that address your concerns.



Our Church Vestry meeting was opened by Ruth on April 13, 2021 on Zoom with prayer and with seven attending. The Elders were welcomed with four attending. Pastor noted that garden work has begun. The MN state guidelines for Covid preparedness for faith communities for Apr 14 means that Redeemer can plan for live worship in June and with live stream. We will use masks and keep safe distancing, that is, singing with masks. Safe communion distribution will be worked out as well as coffee hour to be adjusted for safety.

Pastor indicated that son David would like to have a memorial service for mother Irene Markley in June. Also a service for Sam Rankin by Diane is to be discussed and scheduled. There have been conversations with St Paul Reformation and Bethlehem for outdoor services on Thur evening. Services are planned for Ascension May 13 5p St Paul Reformation, for St John the Baptist June 24 5p at Redeemer, and for St Mary Magdalene, July 22, 5 pm at Bethlehem. And Pastor JoAnne Conroy is organizing a nationwide program with Stop the Violence Alliance, Inc. on May 23, 3pm at Redeemer.

The Future Committee continues to gather facts for future uses of Redeemer space. The Energy Audit suggested by SPAS is ongoing with a HVAC company, who suggested that Redeemer could obtain savings by having a graduated blower start system on its heater. A lighting audit will be conducted next. Summary of these audits are expected by June. In general, some improvement costs can be covered by rebates.

The Vestry moved, seconded and agreed to authorize expenditure up to \$2500 for a mobile flexible live streaming solution. The equipment will be sent to David in May and made ready for services in June.

Project Home now has moved into its new facilities at Randolph and Fairview on St Joseph's campus. There are 30 people already for a limit of 100. The ability for families to have safe rooms as well as private and social amenities is wonderful and a great advance on the month to month living quarters that our Project Home guests had to live with here with us at Redeemer and at many other churches in St Paul. The meeting was adjourned at 8:14p.

The next Vestry meeting is planned for May 11, 2021.

A Note from Member Michael Mulokozi . . .

Reverend Pastor James,

It is my hope that this message finds you well and your family as well.

I am very humbled and appreciating for everything that you, your family, and the entire church did for me. It is something that will be a symbol in my entire life and unforgettable. I would say that the only God will bless you all of you who took time to make me feel welcomed and safe. I saw the power of Christ in you and through you I am now safe.

I would like to inform you that the USCIS granted me a permanent residency, and I am now a permanent resident. My dream of 13 years calling the United States home has become true.

Again, thank you so much, and may The Lord Jesus Christ bless you all abundantly.

I hope to see you soon when we open for the services.

Sincerely,
N. Michael Mulokozi



**REDEEMER'S COURTYARD GARDEN – POLLINATORS AND
PLANTS FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT**
A REFLECTION BY DIANA M RANKIN

It's almost May 1st and the Courtyard Garden is beginning to come alive. *Mertensia* (Virginia bluebells), *Pulmonaria*, and Mrs. Kunz's bleeding heart are blooming. The queen bumble bees have come out of their winter shelters and we can now see what survived the winter and what succumbed to the 116 hours of temps below zero between February 11 and 16. This was the 10th longest such period since 1873. It was also a fairly dry winter which, with combined with cold, can cause severe plant damage. Fortunately, the Courtyard Garden seems to have come through the winter quite well.

The garden was created in 1996 in honor of Art & Frieda Kunz (Leilani Drake's parents) and a plaque on the Learning Center wall facing the garden dedicates the garden to their memory. Like any garden it has evolved over the past 25 years as some plants died, others were removed, some popped up spontaneously, and native and pollinator-friendly plants were added.

It is now time to make some needed improvements so that the space is more enjoyable for both people and pollinators and easier to access and maintain. Here is a list of projects we'd like to accomplish this year.

- Aerate the lawn areas. These are rough and bumpy due to soil compaction and earthworms.
- Severely prune the Isanti dogwood shrubs and the William Baffin rose to remove dead stems and encourage new growth.
- Remove the arborvitae shrub/tree leaning next to the church building.
- Add compost and/or good garden soil to the top two garden tiers. Divide or replant desirable plants. Dig out and dispose of those that are not desirable; this includes those horrible orange "ditch" daylilies.
- Remove weeds from around and underneath the roses on the lowest tier and put down mulch.
- Add colorful annuals, preferably those that are pollinator-friendly.

There are smaller garden areas that also need ongoing attention. These include the two beds at the entrance to the parking lot door and two plantings at the base of the bell tower. There is also a planting along the east side of the church. The primary issue there is to remove/kill the vines that have overtaken the window wells.

Paul Toftness and I have been the primary caretakers.

On Church Finances And Other Plagues

Bob Paddock: Church Treasurer

Well the time finally came around in which I was asked to submit another article for the ***Redeemer Record***. I must admit that I began this series of articles all fired up to present to the congregation a wondrous review of finances in the church from all angles and facets. At the outset it seemed ludicrous that anyone could find anything "wondrous" to report on in regard to finances, which is such a dry, boring topic. Nonetheless, I wanted to give it a whirl. Now that we have made it through the first quarter of the year, I'm running out of ideas! Well, that didn't last very long, did it? And I had such high hopes.

However, before I wax eloquently on a brand new topic, I believe that this time around, my efforts would be better spent on examining where we are (financially speaking) at this point of the year so that the congregation can have a look. Income and expenses reported here are for the first quarter - January through March.

INCOME:

As far as offerings, rental receipts and other deposits go, we ended up the 1st Quarter with a total of **\$63,571.02**. This figure represents **28%** of anticipated annual revenues, so we are right on schedule in that respect. Omitting an unexpected check for \$5,000 in January, the actual revenue still came to 25.7% for the quarter, which represents (of course) 25% of the year. Offerings from parishioners came to around \$55,000; rental receipts were another \$3,700.

EXPENSES:

Tallying up all of our bills for the period, the church paid out **\$67,754.78**, which comes to **27.6%** of budgeted expenses for the year. Again, we are basically right on track. Still, that fact astonishes me in that the first quarter expenses include high winter heating bills and snow plowing. Of the \$67,754.78 in expenses, \$26,170.78 were for '*Buildings & Grounds*', which was 39% of all bills. Heating and lights accounted for \$10,899, and street assessments another \$4,986.

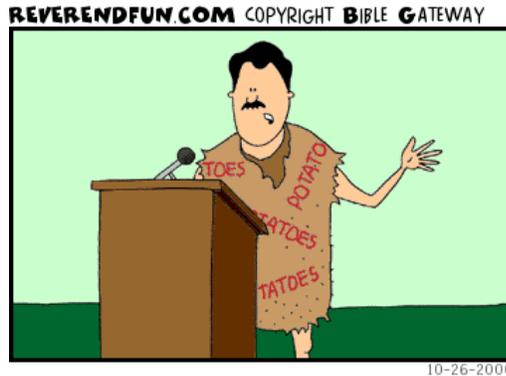
ACCOUNT BALANCES:

Looking at all of our accounts, I am pleased to report that as of the end of the first quarter, we have a total of **\$131,081.49** available to us. That includes \$114,811.76 in the Vanguard investment account, \$2,000.56 in the savings account, and \$14,269.11 in checking.

It is the checking account that needs to be the focus of our attention at this point. Every dollar currently in this account has been spoken for, because it all represents monies given for dedicated items. I cannot pay bills from these funds unless the 'giver' agrees. This situation requires that you please continue to send in your offerings to the church, so that I can continue to pay the expenses that come in the mail whether we want them or not. The generosity of our parishioners makes me proud!

MORTGAGE:

As of the end of the quarter, our mortgage was \$81,732.71. The original loan amount was for \$295,000. Ten years ago it stood at \$223,656.00. The mortgage will be paid off in four years in February 2025.



I'M AFRAID THE CHURCH'S FINANCIAL
OUTLOOK IS NOT SO GOOD

Lutheran Church of the Redeemer and
National Stop the Violence Alliance Inc. Present:



National Interfaith Service
for Peace

"WORKING FOR JUSTICE & SEEKING PEACE"

**SUNDAY, MAY 23, 2021
3:00 - 5:00 PM**

LIVE/IN-PERSON AT Lutheran Church of the Redeemer
285 No. Dale St., St. Paul, MN
(2 blocks south of I-94 on Dale St.)
(Face Masks Mandatory for those attending live, in-person)

Also Livestream on Facebook & Zoom link TBA

Speakers from All Faiths, Cultural Dancers & Musical Guest

**"Behold, how good and pleasant it is when God's
people live together in unity" (Psalm 133:1)**

Contact: Pastor James Erlandson
at jameserlandson@msn.com or redemerstpaul@gmail.com
Dr. Stephne Coney at stopviolence@icloud.com

Lutheran Church of the Redeemer
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St. Paul, MN 55103-2486

