

THE REDEEMER RECORD

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LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

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Tahnea Brown, Office Manager

Pastor's Letter from Home

*We've come this far by faith, leaning on the Lord;
Trusting in his holy word, he's never failed us yet.
Oh, can't turn around, we've come this far by faith.
We've come this far by faith. (ELW #633)*

Dear Friends,

It has been a long, long, long time since we have worshipped together in person at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer. The COVID pandemic shutdown and resulting physical separations has taught us many things about ourselves, about patience, about community, resilience, and what's truly important. But it is also true that we have long awaited the day that we can gather again for in-person worship together. And now, as most Minnesotans are being vaccinated and covid cases are decreasing in number, we are getting closer to the day that we can worship together again! It is so close that we can taste it!

It is true that we have been able to do much more together than we thought we could while we have been physically separated. We have learned a lot about technology, Zoom technology, recording music and creating videos, holding meetings virtually and even receiving communion virtually. (We even have discovered the deeper truth that communion with Jesus' presence has always been virtual!) Having never heard of Zoom in March of 2020, we soon learned how to make this internet program our mainstay for public worship, gathering us across the country and even across the world every Sunday morning. Not only from our homes throughout the Twin Cities, but people zoomed in on Sundays from northern Minnesota, St. Louis, Albuquerque and even from as far as Istanbul, Turkey! Kim and I zoomed in from Providence, Rhode Island on Easter Sunday, and from Houston, Texas on Ascension Sunday! So we learned a lot about what is possible in cyberspace via internet.

But still we long for worship when we are in the physical presence of each other, to sing hymns and hear each other's voices, to see the musicians play music, to hear God's Word read and preached from a person in the same room, to share the peace and receive holy eucharist in the sanctuary we have gathered in for years. To share fellowship in each other's presence, and maybe even a hug or human touch. This day is coming soon. If all goes well, this is our plan for June:

We will begin worship in person on Sunday when we are also able to livestream (for those who are unable to come in person). If our livestream equipment arrives and we are able to train in persons to run the equipment, our goal is IN PERSON WORSHIP ON SUNDAY, JUNE 20 at 10 am. (On June 6 & 13 we will worship via Zoom.) Watch for email announcements closer to that date.

We will begin cautiously, following Minnesota Department of Health guidelines for faith communities. At the start, MASKS ARE MANDATORY indoors, so we will wear masks in the sanctuary at worship. We will keep social distancing, so 2 out of every 3 pews will be roped off. We will not distribute communion by hand, person to person - each person will take their communion cup and wafer to their seat to eat and drink. Coffee hour/refreshments will be served outside this summer in the courtyard garden, weather permitting. If you are ill, please stay home.

At some point later this summer, we may be able to relax these restrictions. As soon as it is safe, and as state guidelines advise. We may never go back "to normal" as things once were before, but "normal" never was perfect. But we plan to celebrate worship together again, by praising God with thanks for bringing us safely back. We will celebrate graduations, anniversaries, special feast days on the church calendar, and observe other new days of lament such as remembering the Emmanuel Nine on June 17. We will seek ways to invite the community to worship with us, especially outside during the summer. We will hear the church bells ring once again, and reach out to our neighbors in ways we have been unable to do during the pandemic.

On our first Sunday back in-person, we will begin with a new worship rite for re-gathering prepared by the larger Church. In the meantime, we have some preparations to do: cleaning, groundskeeping and garden care, and worship planning for in-person worship in the sanctuary. Pray for our re-gathering, and watch for ways in which you can participate in worship, mission and outreach at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer now and in the future!

Peace in Christ,

Pastor Jim Erlandson

JUNE 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.

June 6	Eloise Paddock
June 13	Lyle Nelson
June 20	Benjamin Cretsinger
June 27	Joan Foreman

	First Reading	Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel
June 6 <i>Pentecost 2</i>	Gen 3:8-15	Ps 130	2 Cor 4:13—5:1	Mark 3:20-35
June 13 <i>Pentecost 3</i>	Ezek 17:22-24	Ps 92:1-4, 12-15	2 Cor 5:6-10 [11-13] 14-17	Mark 4:26-34
June 20 <i>Pentecost 4</i>	Job 38:1-11	Ps 107:1-3, 23-32	2 Cor 6:1-13	Mark 4:35-41
June 27 <i>Pentecost 5</i>	Lam 3:22-33	Ps 30	2 Cor 8:7-15	Mark 5:21-43

THE FEAST OF JOHN THE BAPTIST, JUNE 24

On Thursday, June 24 we will celebrate the Feast of John the Baptist at 6:00 pm with holy eucharist outdoors in the church courtyard garden. We are hosting friends from St. Paul-Reformation Lutheran and Bethlehem-on-the-Midway Lutheran Church. The birth and life of John the Baptist is celebrated exactly six months before Christmas Eve. John himself said that he must decrease as Jesus increased. According to Nordic tradition, John was born as the days are longest and then steadily decrease. In many northern countries this day is celebrated with customs associated with the summer solstice, so we will light a bonfire and have refreshments outside in the courtyard garden, a Midsommar Celebration.



Our Church Vestry meeting was opened by Sybil on May 11, 2021 on Zoom with prayer and with all attending. Pastor Jim said he was looking forward to his brief break in Houston with his family. Pastor Jim conducted a funeral with over 80 attending according to Minnesota health standards of masking and safe distance for faith communities. Music was offered as well. There will be an outdoor service at Redeemer on June 24 at 6p with St Paul Reformation and Bethlehem congregations.

Preparations continue for live person worship with live streaming from June. This will be done according to Minnesota Department of Health guidelines for masking and safe distancing. Outdoor gathering is easier, so coffee hour can be organized, too. Live streaming will make it possible for those who prefer to worship at home.

Bob screen shared the April treasurer's report. Monthly expenses exceed monthly income. Cash balance is \$128000 and mortgage due is \$80000. Cost saving improvements are being made as a result of the energy audit. The cost of changing bulbs to LED will be balanced with rebates and refunds.

The Vestry discussed Diane Butler Bass's work on loss as Redeemer gets ready to begin live person worship again. We recognize that things we knew from the past may be misplaced, but not gone and forgotten. We can gently rebuild relations and create order. Outdoor live worship events are planned for June. An outdoor service with neighboring St Paul Reformation and Bethlehem is planned for June 24 at 6p and a live concert for Sat, June 26.

Sybil closed the meeting at 8:26pm.

Next Vestry meeting will be Jun 8.

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

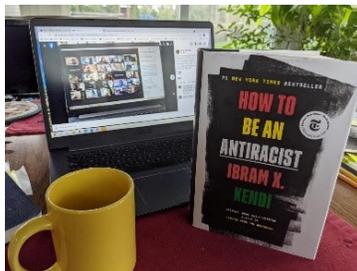
Sociologist and researcher Brene Brown has focused much of her attention and work on leadership in recent years. Back in April, she released a two-part podcast to discuss some of her findings, the difference between armored leadership (which is rooted in fear) and daring leadership, which requires vulnerability (the subject for which she's best known) and a willingness to learn. As I caught up on those episodes recently, it occurred to me there are some key insights for congregations – certainly before now, but even more so as life in our community resumes a more normal rhythm.

Even before the year+plus of a pandemic put nearly every normal social, communal interaction into shutdown (or at least very minimal contact) mode, congregations of all denominational stripes and sizes were struggling with changes that had been taking place in society over the past decades. (I've written about some of these in past articles.) The lifting of the restrictions from the pandemic will not be quite like pressing the "play" button on a paused tape. Eventually things may reach a similar state to the way there were prior to the pandemic, but not everything will go back to just the way it was before. Our world has changed. We've been changed.

Great – just what we need: more discomfort from change on top of already uncomfortable changes! This is the line of thinking that can lead to a couple of strategies Ms. Brown defines as "armored leadership." First is insisting on being a knower, someone who has all the answers and knows just what to do. When we insist on having to be right all the time, we close our minds to new possibilities that can emerge as we seek to understand something. Another strategy is to operate from a mindset of scarcity: we don't have enough or we might not have enough. Either way, this leads to operating out of fear, not out of faith in God who provides all we need. Finally, there is nostalgia for how it used to be, which is usually constructed around people knowing their roles and places and staying in line.

Strategies like these will not help us move forward into post-pandemic life. Instead, as Ms. Brown suggests, what is needed is a willingness to admit we don't know too much about what to do, how to do it because we've never done this before. When we do that, we can sit with the uncertainties and puzzle things out, figure out what we need to do and how to do it. This does take patience and willingness to sit with a problem while resisting quick fixes and easy answers. It also requires trust – trust in each other and trust in a God who has provided what's needed as needed ... who has promised to be with us always ... and who will not abandon us now.

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you"
~ Luke 24:36



We will continue the Wednesday evening prayer and book discussion on **How to Be an Antiracist** by **Ibram X Kendi** in June. Please join us Wednesday Evenings @ 7 pm on Zoom.



HONORING OUR GRADUATES

Redeemer wishes to honor our graduates from High School and higher education: colleges, universities, or art schools. Please let us know if there are graduates connected to Redeemer this year. We would like to recognize them in worship at Redeemer (in person) in June or on another summer date.

Urban Gardening - Diana Rankin

Visiting public gardens is one of my highest joys. There is so much beauty in what is often a small space. The Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in rural Chaska and the Japanese Garden in St Paul's Como Park are two of my local favorites. For me, a visit to any city must include at least one trip to a public garden.

Thomas Jefferson's Monticello and George Washington's Mount Vernon are historically significant for their gardens, but both were built and tended by African slaves with oversight by their slave owners. Ojibway women may have planted their gardens of squash, beans, and corn on land that is now the City of Saint Paul. Southeast Asian immigrants and their children now plant the mustards, corn, squash, melons, peppers, and herbs that they grew in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos in small plots located all over the Twin Cities, including Redeemer's front lawn. The Aurora-St. Anthony Peace Garden in our own Rondo neighborhood nurtures youth, brings community members together, promotes peace, and practices environmental justice while growing vegetables in the city.

Urban gardens are community gardens, containers of vegetables and flowers on patios or balconies, and boulevard and alley gardens planted wherever the sun shines at least 6-8 hours a day. They are the gardens planted in our city parks, around public buildings, on street corners, in church yards and cemeteries, and even in mall parking lots.

Urban gardens are as diverse as the people who live here. They satisfy our varied needs for beauty in our lives, connection to the natural world, and spiritual well-being. There are miniature prairies planted in front yards, water gardens of all types, rose gardens, perennial gardens, pollinator gardens, and cutting gardens. Gardens can be carefully curated collections of trees and shrubs, landscaping around a lake, and sculpture parks. They can even be founded in public buildings for our winter enjoyment.

Whatever their size, shape, location, or purpose, gardens reflect God's love for creation. Where do Redeemer's gardens fit within this world of possibilities and what purpose do they serve? First and foremost, we strive to make our gardens places of physical and spiritual sustenance.

- The Hmong Healing Garden in the front lawn grows traditional food and herbs. It is a place that provides food and a link to Hmong traditional culture for those who till it.
- The tiny flower bed near the parking lot entrance was initially planted with seeds from Jake Fuchs' collection of hardy hibiscus. It was also a place to marvel at how marigold seeds survived the winter to produce a carpet of orange and yellow blooms in summer. Now it is a waystation for monarch butterflies, bumble bees, and other pollinators passing through the neighborhood.
- The garden along the Learning Center south wall is fondly known as a "hellstrip" garden. The soil is poor, the space is narrow, and conditions are very hot and dry on a summer day. In winter it is covered with plowed and shoveled snow along with sand and salt. Plants that can withstand these conditions include hardy grasses, drought-tolerant native plants for pollinators, and a few hardy perennials and shrubs.
- The Courtyard Garden, dedicated to Mrs. Frieda Kunz, is a place of beauty, solitude, and prayer in every season -- regardless of whether it has been weeded. The pandemic prevented us from tending it last summer and still there were colorful flowers and cool places for rest, meditation, and prayer. It has been especially wonderful to see it re-emerge this spring, full of surprises at what survived despite our neglect. We continue to add plants for bees and butterflies as well as plants whose beauty provides a burst of wonder at God's creation.
- Finally, we are building a hosta bed on the north side of the church and hoping for inspiration and strong backs to renovate the plantings on the east side once the Dale Street construction is finished.

Pope Francis has said, "As stewards of God's creation, we are called to make the earth a beautiful garden for the human family." Gardens in our urban landscapes are big and small, grand and humble, neat and messy, inspirational and mundane. Regardless of how we perceive a garden, each gardener's garden has a role to play in the earth beautiful for our own enjoyment and that of future generations.

Therefore, "GO FORTH AND GARDEN! THANKS BE TO GOD!"

Urban Gardening



White Gas Plant is a descendant of Mrs. Kunz's plants.



Iris Cristata is an early spring bloomer.



Prairie Clover and Nodding in the Hellstrip Garden; bright summer flowers in the Courtyard Garden



Cilantro and a variety of mustards in the Hmong Healing Garden



Faith in Democracy

ISAIAH

CORE TEAM NEWS

During the last few weeks, ISAIAH leaders have been busy dropping literature, holding rallies and holding phone banks in key legislative districts to raise awareness of what's at stake for our communities in this session's state budget. We are advocating for spending priorities in Child Care, Paid Family Medical Leave and Police Accountability. This bold legislation will improve lives for many Minnesotans. We have also encouraged policies that will give all Minnesotans a voice in decision-making and cultivate greater equity and justice in our communities. The budget is being negotiated as this edition of the Record is being published. No matter the outcome, we have raised the voices of many across the state in a call for a caring economy that works for all of us.

This summer, Saint Paul leaders will be working on many issues including housing, rent stability, Public Safety and the fall election for Mayor and half of the School Board Members.

If you are concerned about the climate, please call Gov. Walz's office at (651-201-3400) and thank him for his leadership on Clean Cars and tell him you support Clean Cars. Also ask him to halt the building of Line 3 in Northern MN.

On June 3rd, there will be a Paid Family Medical Leave rally at the State Senate Office Bld. at 10AM.

As always, please contact your elected officials and express your support for bold legislation (be specific about the issue) that will create a multi-racial economy for all Minnesotans.

We continue to hear from our elected officials that our calls, letters and emails are very important to them!!!

NATIONAL INTERFAITH SERVICE OF PEACE

On Pentecost Sunday, May 23, Redeemer hosted, along with the National Stop the Violence Alliance, a National Interfaith Service of Peace. This was a live and online worship service broadcast nationally from our sanctuary, with speakers, songs, and prayers from across the country, from many faiths. Though the attendance inside the church was small, due to the pandemic restrictions, the online attendance was national. Pastor Jim Erlandson and Pastor Joann Conroy from Redeemer were speakers.





60 SOMETHING BAND: THE SUMMER OF LOVE

The Hits from 1967 & More



Kick off the Summer and the end of Covid with The 60 Something Band on Saturday, June 26 at 6:00 pm. The Band will celebrate the Summer of Love with hits from 1967, including songs from Buffalo Springfield, the Rolling Stones, Jose Feliciano, and of course, The Beatles "Sergeant Pepper" album. Celebrate Pastor Jim's and Mark Lofthus's 67th birthday, Jim and Kim's 35th wedding anniversary in this opportunity to sing, dance, and eat together at Redeemer! Dinner will be served at 6:00 pm, and the 60 Something Band will play at 7:00 pm. Wear your love beads, tie dye or paisley shirts with bell bottom jeans, and enjoy a night of beloved music in the spirit of peace and love. It's FREE (like God's love)! Donations accepted to Lutheran Church of the Redeemer ministry of music.



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