



TIDINGS

Redeemer Lutheran Church
1545 Chain Bridge Road
McLean, VA 22101

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A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR KESSINGER

Not that long ago I preached a sermon that encouraged us to answer the question that is most asked of us: *How are you?* with the response: *I am grateful.* It is a different response than people are used to, so it often makes them stop, pause and then smile. In my experience it also opens up the possibility of a real conversation as we explain the reasons we are thankful.

Since that sermon my son-in-law made me aware that people can download a *Gratitude* app on their smart phones. Some of the apps will send you a daily reminder to write a word or phrase that describes who or what made the day a *good* one. The one app I downloaded also allows me to include additional thoughts and/or photos that captures any significant moments. It is a quick and easy way to remember to be grateful each and every day.

We start a new year on January 1, and we start a new decade, 2020.
Let us start and end this coming year with words of gratitude.

We have much to be grateful for! It is so easy to include God, our families and friends but we would be remiss in not giving some thought as to why we are thankful for them. For me, I am blessed continually by God, my family reflects the love I have for them, and my friends keep me grounded and humble. My list is so long so for the purpose of this newsletter I will restrict my thoughts to our church family.

I am grateful for . . .
Redeemer

As I complete seven years of ministry here and enter my eighth year with all of you, I thank God that I have been called to a congregation that is so open and generous. We have grown together in our faith and in our understanding of Scripture. We have grown in numbers as we lead with a sense of compassion for all people. Each day that I come to the church it is with a sense of peace because I am not alone. Our council and other leaders are dedicated people who monitor the different aspects of our ministry and also offer me a great deal of support. It is good, Lord, to be here where we are blessed to be thriving.

I am grateful for . . .
Our Volunteers

We lean heavily on our staff to do the work of the church, but it takes all of us working together to ensure all gets done (and done well). I am grateful for everyone who offers any time to help us. Our volunteers are visible on Sunday mornings but so much more happens during the week inside and outside of our church building. I offer you just a couple of examples. On some mornings I arrive at 7 am and people are already outside tending to our property. On some days I walk into our sanctuary only to find people polishing our silver chalices or arranging flowers for our services. And when I cannot be present for one of our Bible studies then there are others who offer to lead the lessons.

On January 12 (the Baptism of our Lord) we will introduce to you our new *Time and Talent Pledge* card. It will be a wonderful opportunity for each of us to prayerfully consider where we would like to share our gifts. As we have been hearing over the Advent Season from some of our volunteers, giving of our time helps us feel part of the faith community. And the more we get involved the more aware we become of what is needed and when and how we can serve.

I am grateful for . . .

Our Staff

In the past year three of our staff members moved to other positions at other churches. It has put additional work on our current staff. I am grateful for the flexibility of our paid staff as we reconfigure job descriptions and anticipate new staff being called and/or hired. I am grateful that we set aside time once a week for staff meetings. We start with devotions and we pray for everyone on our prayer list. As we deliberate on the different ministries that we are responsible for, we do so with the well-being of the church in mind.

I am grateful for . . .

Flexibility!

I have used the word *flexibility* to describe a quality needed in our staff, but it is a word that I would use to describe our congregation as well. I am grateful that we are not set in our ways but can adapt as needed. We are open to how God is at work even if it changes our course of action in ways that we did not expect.

It might be time for some more flexibility!

A new possibility has been put before us that we need to consider. In December I sat down with our synod bishop, Bishop Leila Ortiz, to discuss our call process. As the conversation unfolded she asked if we were open to having an intern in the coming year. My immediate reaction was to say that we did not want to slow down the call process for an Associate Pastor. Bishop Ortiz assured me that the two could run parallel with each other.

Some thoughts from our conversation:

Bishop Ortiz sees Redeemer as a good teaching parish. We are active and growing and our ministries would offer a seminarian the opportunity to broaden his/her understanding of the different parts of *Word and Sacrament* ministry. I had two interns in my previous calls, so I am well aware of the responsibilities. It fits my skill set since I love to teach and mentor.

Our council leaders have discussed it thoroughly and we want to wait to hire a new Youth Director until after we call an Associate Pastor. We find it prudent to wait and see what gifts the new pastor brings to the ministry and then we can determine what we need to enhance our youth program. As a result, from a financial perspective we could keep within our proposed budget and work towards having an intern on-site from June of 2020 to June of 2021 (approximately).

Bishop Ortiz indicated to me that there were not many candidates open for calls at this time so we will need to be patient with the process. She and Pastor Lamar Bailey (the assistant to the bishop) will work diligently on our behalf. We have no idea of the time frame but remain open and optimistic.

What does all of this mean?

Paperwork for the internship process is due January 15. We will complete the paperwork and submit it to United Lutheran Seminary. However, it is important that we hear from the members of the congregation to see if this is a direction we want to proceed in the coming year. In January there will be opportunities to have conversations with council (date and time to be determined) and then we can continue the conversation at our annual meeting to be held on February 2. Even though we will complete the paperwork and will submit it by the due date, we can pull out of the process if we feel it is not something that our members want to pursue. Entering into the internship program does not need a formal congregational vote but we do want solid backing from our members to move forward.

What are the advantages?

We are a good teaching parish and it helps the wider church prepare seminarians for ministry.
It would offer us the additional help we need in the absence of other ministry staff.
Compensation is comparable to that of our youth director, so it is within our budget.
It does not delay the work of the Call Committee for an Associate Pastor.
If the two positions overlap it is still within our current budget financially.
I thrive on having someone to work with in a mentoring role.

What are the disadvantages?

It does put more work on me, but I can also share some of my responsibilities.
We have a short period of time to make sure our members are supportive with the idea as the matching process starts at the end of February.

One more thing for which I am grateful . . .

No matter what decisions are made about an intern and other issues of the church, I know we will make them prayerfully and with the intent to *share Christ's love with the greatest number of people.*

Thank you! For those of us who have a smartphone think about downloading one of the *Gratitude* apps. There are no age restrictions! It is good to just find a good and consistent time to pause and be thankful.

From your grateful pastor –
Pastor Sandy Kessinger



2019 Year-End Financial Update

Through your generous giving, we have made up our year-to-date operating shortfall and have covered all our current expenses for December. Since there are some additional expenses and revenues for December that still need to be received and processed, we won't have a final total until mid-January. Any resulting surplus operating funds will ensure that Redeemer is well positioned for the start of the new year. Thank you very much for your generosity and commitment to our work together in God's kingdom.

JANUARY

Come and Worship
8:30 am, 9:45 am, and 11:00 am

- January 8 Wednesday Morning Bible Study – 8:00 am
Wednesday Evening Bible Study – 7:15 pm
Every Wednesday in January for Both Classes
Bible Talk Lunch with Pastor – 11:30 am
- January 11 Men's Breakfast at Madison Deli – 8:00 am
- January 12 Meet with Pastor Kessinger – 12:15 pm
(For those interested in learning more about Redeemer)
Confirmation Workshop – 4:00 pm
- January 15 Quilting Ministry – 9:30 am
- January 16 Prayer Shawl Ministry – 10:30 am
- January 19 Receive New Members
- January 23 *Bible Talk* Dinner with Pastor – 7:00 pm



February 2
Congregational Annual Meeting – 12:15 pm

Lutheran Church of the Redeemer

Minutes from the Church Council Meeting of December 9, 2019

Council members present: Laura Duval (President), [Karen Detweiler \(Secretary\)](#), [Rob Wenk \(Treasurer\)](#), [Pastor Kessinger](#), [Mitch Brown](#), [Ellen Kennedy](#), [Florence Ofili-Toviho](#), Roberta Pittman, Liz Holzapfel, and Stephanie Hunter.

Unable to attend were Matthew Kratz (Vice President), Nathan Paukovits, and Annabel Richter (Youth Member),

Also present was [Cynthia Waldron](#) to present the proposed 2020 budget.

Call to order: President Duval called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm

Opening devotions (PSK): PSK opened with a devotion on how food is never just food. Council members shared their favorite, memorable meals.

Adoption of agenda: The agenda was accepted without change.

Pastor's report: Pastor Kessinger provided her report highlighting three baptisms since the last report and several more scheduled. Doug Ubben and Megan Kratz have completed eight years of service on Mutual Ministry. Karen Miller and Chris Hunter will succeed them in this role.

Approval of minutes of November 11, 2019 Council meeting (copy attached): Rob Wenk moved and Liz Holzapfel seconded approval. Minutes from the November Council Meeting were approved without change.

Executive Committee minutes (copy attached): President Duval summarized the Executive Committee minutes. Topics will be addressed through the regular meeting agenda.

Treasurer's report (copy attached):

Rob Wenk reported we were strong on receipts. The \$113K shortfall reported last month will be updated on Sunday based on yesterday's receipts.

For Council action:

Church Budget Review:

- Cynthia Waldron provided the 2020 Proposed Budget.
 - * The proposed budget is only slightly higher than last year's budget.
 - * A summary is provided in response to last year's feedback at the annual meeting.
 - ⇒ The categories were agreed to last year.
 - ⇒ The summary of income, expenses, additional contributions needed, and surplus has been provided for transparency.
 - * The Building Cleaning Services category now includes some costs previously carried under the staff services. We continue in negotiations with the cleaning service regarding number of people/days.
 - * Electricity is budgeted lower based on actual expenses.
 - * Insurance and other cost elements are based on actual expenses.
 - * Education – "Other" category provides a cushion for additional expenses to anticipate growth.
 - * Flowers and Decorations will continue to be a modest expense as long as people continue to purchase poinsettias, Easter Lilies, etc. Those purchases cover a significant share of the actual expenses in flowers and decorations.
 - * Living Nativity costs about \$1000. The fundraiser that evening is for the youth programs. Cindy will correct the proposed number for Living Nativity based on actuals.
 - * Mailings hold steady at \$2200, and Parish Administration is steady at \$36,000.
 - * Pastor's Books and Expenses includes ordinary reimbursable expenses. Rob Wenk and Cynthia Waldron will review the guidelines to see if that should get separated out.

- * In 2020 there will be 27 paydays rather than 26.
 - * Social concerns' budget is stable at \$24,900. Note that when we support additional programs like Rise Against Hunger, it is a pass-through of the member donations directly to the organization.
 - * Synod Benevolence is a slight increase (\$2,000).
 - * The Music line item is up slightly. Note that this is for expenses such as tuning pianos, not for staff expenditures. Cindy will coordinate with Matt Osifchin to validate the budget request.
 - * We removed Living Nativity (previously discussed) from the youth ministry budget category and moved it to Parish Life.
 - * We will have lower staff costs this year because a new Associate Pastor and Youth Director are likely to be only part of the year. However, we had a good cost-sharing arrangement for Pr. Erin's insurance because her husband is also a pastor. Rob and Cindy will recalculate the staff costs for the Associate Pastor and Youth Director on a half-year basis to reflect the likelihood we won't be fully staffed until Summer.
- Rob and Cynthia will revise the budget based on Council discussion and bring the revised version back to Council in January.
 - Stewardship communications with the congregation:
 - * Marketing guidance is a message needs to be presented seven times, in seven different ways, for it to be recalled. We will continue to present stewardship information in a variety of ways to the congregation.
 - * What, besides the annual meeting, should we do to communicate with congregants so that they stay well informed? We discussed having "Coffee with Council" the Sundays between dissemination of annual report (that includes the proposed budget) and the Annual Meeting. It was also proposed that Council members wear nametags in a color other than the plain white ones to indicate they serve on council and members can approach them about ongoing Church matters.
 - Annual review of Pastor Kessinger: Rob Wenk moved and multiple council members seconded approval of our annual performance review discussion including compensation.
 - Every year the Synod Benevolence line of the proposed budget needs council approval. It reflects a 3% increase. The Council voted on the increase. Pastor moved approval of that increase and Mitch Brown seconded. Passed unanimously.
 - The Special Congregational meeting held on February 8 went well and the Associate Pastor Call Committee was approved.
 - Long term building and grounds planning was deferred to next meeting.
 - Council for 2020 and Annual Meeting Planning. The only new member of Council needed will be a youth representative. Pastor Kessinger recommended Will Ubben and he has agreed to have his name put forward at the annual meeting. Laura will send out requests to Chairs of committees to submit their annual reports to Carol.
 - Ministry Reports:
 - * Stewardship met and is moving forward.
 - * We have a mission trip opportunity to the Bahamas. Note that this is not a youth trip; it is open to adults.

Closing with prayer: The Council closed with the Lord's Prayer at 9:40 PM.

Next meeting of Council: January 13, 2020

Next meeting of Executive Committee: January 7, 2020



Donald Daus	1/1	John Corvari	1/11	Mark Hughes	1/23
Kevin Maul	1/1	William Dutrow	1/11	Julian Mentzel	1/24
Marion Lockhard-Schultz	1/2	William Frisbie	1/11	Emma Mykityshyn	1/24
Sharon Tonsager	1/2	Edwin Pan	1/11	Jenna Raimondi	1/24
David Truslow	1/2	Ginger Torgrimson	1/11	Grace Chambers	1/25
Hayley Wenk	1/2	Christopher Armstrong	1/12	Emma Horn	1/25
Sverre Bach	1/3	Madeleine Engel	1/12	Natalie Horn	1/25
Melissa Gorsline	1/3	Sebastian Salzman	1/12	Dan Retter	1/25
Charles Lettow	1/3	Tessa Stoll	1/12	Rebecca Behravesch	1/26
Daniel Bader V	1/4	Rekha Arness	1/14	Benjamin Epstein	1/26
David Young	1/4	Martha Blue	1/14	Benjamin Campet	1/28
Justin Young	1/4	Knut Opsal	1/14	Caroline Elliot	1/28
Kelly Dewberry	1/5	James Sullivan	1/14	Alexandra Gomes McKay	1/28
James Prince	1/5	Madison Barb	1/15	Cindy Goodman	1/28
Jessamin Straub	1/5	Matthew Duval	1/15	Forrest Stieg	1/28
JaLyn Tiffany	1/5	Amara Okorie	1/16	Kevin Dempsey	1/29
Annelie Wiklund	1/5	Arcel Castillo	1/17	Nicholas Elbert	1/29
Daniel Moreno	1/6	Phyllis Peter-Mallard	1/17	Adem Sevimli	1/29
Judy Prince	1/6	Elias Tiffany	1/17	Anika Crone	1/30
Karlen Bader	1/7	Joseph 'JoJo' Warren	1/17	Gretchen Odegard	1/30
Judith Kastner	1/7	Justin Bornmann	1/19	Katie Romhilt	1/30
Greg R. Adams	1/8	Kelly Kight	1/19	Bob Speegle	1/30
Griffin Stieg	1/8	Caden Stuart	1/19	Jake Dunleavey	1/31
Christine Bader	1/9	Niels-Oliver DeChaine	1/22	Katherine Miller	1/31
John DeLeonardis	1/9	JoAnn Mueller	1/22	Luke Niles	1/31
Darlene Lebedev	1/9	Jean Speegle	1/22	Jeffrey Pishner	1/31
Finn Koehli	1/10	Nathaniel Tiffany	1/22	Anna Villagran	1/31
Frederick Muhlenberg	1/10	Edward Berendt	1/23		
Tessa Skochko	1/10	Amelia Dutrow	1/23		

Your December Ham Report

On December 5, Rick Stewart delivered 9 boxes of ham weighing 315 pounds to Martha's Table (3), ThriveDC (3) and Community Family Life Services (3) from the Falls Church and Fairfax Honey Baked Ham stores.

On December 6, Ralph Dutrow delivered 4 boxes of ham weighing 140 pounds to So Others Might Eat from the Reston store.

On December 12, Roberta Pittman delivered 13 boxes of ham weighing 400 pounds to ThriveDC from the Falls Church and Fairfax stores.

On December 19, Laura Wareham delivered 5 boxes of ham weighing 175 pounds to N Street Village from the Falls Church and Fairfax stores.

So for the month of December, we delivered 1,030 pounds of ham. We finished off the year with a bang! The breakdown for the month was ThriveDC 505 pounds; N Street Village 175 pounds; SOME 140 pounds; Martha's Table 105 and Community Family Life Services 105 pounds.

This brings our total deliveries for the year to 11,410 pounds. A great year!

Our breakdown for 2019 is as follows: Martha's Table, 3,035 pounds; MANNA, 3,010 pounds; ThriveDC, 2,540 pounds; DC Central Kitchen, 1,015 pounds; Community Family Life Services, 860 pounds; N Street Village, 355 pounds; SOME, 280 pounds; the First Baptist Church of Manassas, 245 pounds and the Father McKenna Center, 70 pounds. All weights are approximate.

If anyone is interested in joining our excellent crew of ham runners, please contact Rick Stewart at:

ricstew2002@yahoo.com

My sincere thanks to everyone for making this such a successful year.



Wed	1/01	6:30p 7:00p 8:00p	MOJO Volleyball Hadi Meditation Al-Anon	PH CL CL	Thu	1/16	10:30a 5:30p 6:30p 7:00p 7:45p	Prayer Shawl Ministry Teen CBS MOJO Volleyball Bell Choir Traditional Choir	LI RLC CR MSA MSB
Thu	1/02	6:30p	MOJO Volleyball	CR	Sun	1/05	8:30a 9:45a 11:00a 12:30p 2:30p	Traditional Worship Contemporary Worship Traditional Worship MOJO Volleyball Daisy Troop	NA NA NA PH CL
Sun	1/05	8:30a 9:45a 11:00a 12:30p 2:30p	Traditional Worship Contemporary Worship Traditional Worship MOJO Volleyball Daisy Troop	NA NA NA PH CL	Sun	1/19	8:30a 9:45a 11:00a 12:00p 12:30p	Traditional Worship Contemporary Worship Traditional Worship Banner Committee MOJO Volleyball	NA NA NA FH PH
Mon	1/06	6:30p 6:30p 7:30p	Aerobics MOJO Volleyball Congregational Council Mtg.	CR PH CR	Mon	1/20	6:30p 6:30p	Aerobics MOJO Volleyball	CR PH
Tue	1/07	12:00p 6:00p 7:00p	Rotary Girl Scouts Boy Scout Troop 1916	FH CL FH	Tue	1/21	12:00p 6:00p 7:00p	Rotary Girl Scouts Boy Scouts 1916	FH CL FH
Wed	1/08	8:00a 6:30p 7:00p 7:15p 8:00p	Bible Study MOJO Volleyball Hadi Meditation Bible Study Al-Anon	CR PH CL CR CL	Wed	1/22	8:00a 7:00p 7:00p 7:15p 8:00p	Bible Study Boy Scouts 816 Hadi Meditation Bible Study Al-Anon	CR CL CL CR CL
Thu	1/09	5:30p 6:30p 7:00p 7:45p	Teen CBS MOJO Volleyball Bell Choir Traditional Choir	RLC PH MSA MSB	Thu	1/23	5:30p 6:30p 7:00p 7:45p	Teen CBS MOJO Volleyball Bell Choir Traditional Choir	RLC CR MSA MSB
Sat	1/11	8:00a	Men's Breakfast	OS	Sun	1/26	8:30a 9:45a 11:00a 12:30p	Traditional Worship Contemporary Worship Traditional Worship MOJO Volleyball	NA NA NA PH
Sun	1/12	8:30a 9:45a 11:00a 12:30p 1:30p 2:30p 3:00p 4:00p	Traditional Worship Contemporary Worship Traditional Worship MOJO Volleyball Brownie Troop 1845 Eagle Scout Ceremony Cub Scouts 861 Confirmation Workshop	NA NA NA PH CL FH CL CR	Mon	1/27	6:30p 6:30p	Aerobics MOJO Volleyball	CR PH
Mon	1/13	6:30p 6:30p 7:30p	Aerobics MOJO Volleyball Congregational Council Mtg.	CR PH CR	Tue	1/28	12:00p 6:00p 7:00p	Rotary Girl Scouts Boy Scouts 1916	FH CL FH
Tue	1/14	12:00p 6:00p 6:00p 7:00p 7:30p	Rotary Girl Scouts Langley Residential Boy Scout Troop 1916 Finance and Administration	FH CL CR FH LI	Wed	1/29	8:00p 7:00p 7:00p 7:15p 8:00p	Bible Study Boy Scouts 816 Hadi Meditation Bible Study Al-Anon	CR CL CL CR CL
Wed	1/15	8:00a 9:30a 6:30p 7:00p 7:15p 8:00p	Bible Study Quilting MOJO Volleyball Hadi Meditation Bible Study Al-Anon	CR FH PH CL CR CL	Thu	1/30	5:30p 6:30p 7:00p 7:45p	Teen CBS MOJO Volleyball Bell Choir Traditional Choir	RLC CR MSA MSB