



TIDINGS

Redeemer Lutheran Church
1545 Chain Bridge Road
McLean, VA 22101

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A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR KESSINGER

ADVENT / CHRISTMAS

We are in a new church year and I am happy to announce that there are only 31 days until 2021. But before we wish the month of December away we have this wonderful opportunity to dwell on the Advent and Christmas seasons. While still in the throes of the pandemic we can count on (and find comfort in) the traditions of the church year that remain the same. Advent will always be four weeks of preparation. Christmas will always come on December 25. And what they mean in the church will always have relevance to the circumstances of our lives.

I hope we will take the time this Advent to appreciate what these four weeks offer. Most of us will make the decision not to enter malls or shopping centers. We will do our best to make the holidays special without going to extremes. And for those reasons alone we will shift our time to pause each week for thirty minutes on Wednesdays for a version of Evening Prayer. In the spirit of keeping vigil for the coming of Christ we will pray, hear the Word of God, and offer some brief reflections on the Scripture passages. It will take place virtually (via Zoom) so we do not have to limit participation. We ask that you sign up for as many weeks as you can attend. I will send you the Zoom link each week.

Advent often highlights four basic themes – hope, peace, joy, and love.
What relevance do these words have for us in 2020?

Hope

The news lately has given us some hope that several vaccines will become available soon. We know that health care professionals and the most vulnerable groups will be the first to receive the vaccine. We can expect it to become available to the rest of the population by spring or early summer. In the meanwhile I hope that everyone reading this will continue to follow the CDC guidelines. We need to wait with patience not only for the coming of Christ but for the pandemic to loosen its grip on us. We are not there yet. Ultimately we put our hope in Jesus Christ who is our Savior! Christ carries our sins! Christ carries our burdens. The things of this world will pass away but not the love of God for us. By faith alone we cling to his promises and find ways to thrive during these difficult times.

Peace

I love the quote by Albert Einstein – *Peace is not merely the absence of war but the presence of justice.* So many challenges from this year will follow us into 2021 including climate change, racism, income disparities, unemployment and hunger to name just a few. As I start to develop concrete goals for our congregation to consider at our next annual meeting these will be foremost on my mind. As a church we are called to live out our faith in action. This has always been our strong point. I trust that as we return to the fullness of worship we will take the time to rededicate and recommit ourselves to new ventures and new ministries that center on the kind of justice that God seeks from his people.

Joy

Over these months the one Bible verse that resounds in my mind every day is – *Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say, rejoice.*

I mentioned several times the book our small group is reading: *Prayer (Does It Make Any Difference)* by Philip Yancey. In the chapter we are currently reading there is a section (written by one of the people that was interviewed) entitled *Treasure Hunt*. In it she describes taking hour-long walks during the day and then at night making a list of answers to her prayers. I have started to do this as a personal spiritual exercise and it has allowed me to find *joy* in the midst of these challenging days. It allows me to find the presence of Christ in each moment. I do not have to be happy about what is happening around me but there is a quietness that settles within me when I reconnect with God in this way. She states it this way: Each day is a treasure hunt where we look for the treasures of God. Each day is a treasure hunt where we find joy in God.

Love

One of the challenges that the pandemic has given us is how to demonstrate our love for others when we are masked and socially distanced at least six feet. I cannot count the number of times I have heard the phrase – I wish I could give you a hug. It makes me think about how many times people wanted to get as close as they could to Jesus so they could just touch the hem of his robe. We need to remember that we have not felt the love of God physically yet we have indeed felt the love of God. I have discovered that love is in a phone call to someone who might not expect a call. It is working together for a common cause like our food collections for SHARE. It is in the pivoting of plans in order to keep people safe. It might be the perfect year for us to show our love for others this Christmas in unique ways. It is a time not to mourn what we cannot do but instead use this time to be creative for the sake of others.

And once the Advent season is over I am happy to announce that there will only be 6 days until 2021. And in those six days we will celebrate Christmas! We will still celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. We will still listen to Christmas carols. Our church will still be decorated and we will still worship Christ, the King. Our in-person (livestreaming) worship services on Christmas Eve will be at 5 pm and 7 pm. If we get an overwhelming response we will add 9 pm. We will also worship in-person (livestreaming) on Christmas Day at 10 am. During the Christmas season it is my hope that we will discover that these themes of Advent prepare us for the joy of Christ and that we will know the peace of Christ that is centered on his love for us.

Start with Advent every Wednesday from 5 to 5:30 pm. Let us move to Christmas content in the moment and celebrate the one thing that does not change – Our love for God in Christ and his love for us!

In Christ – Pastor Sandy Kessinger



IN-PERSON SUNDAY WORSHIP

Traditional Service – 9 am
Contemporary Service – 11 am

Week of November 29
Wednesday, December 2

Evening Prayer (Virtual) – 5 pm
Worship and Music – 7 pm

Week of December 6
Sunday, December 6
Tuesday, December 8
Wednesday, December 9

Confirmation Workshop – 4 pm
Anti-Racism Ministry Team – 7 pm
Evening Prayer (Virtual) – 5 pm

Week of December 13
Monday, December 14
Wednesday, December 16
Friday, December 18

Congregation Council – 7:30 pm
Evening Prayer (Virtual) – 5 pm
Living Nativity – 6:30 pm

Week of December 20
Sunday, December 20
Wednesday, December 23

Blue Christmas – 2 pm
Evening Prayer (Virtual) – 5 pm



Thursday, December 24

Contemporary Christmas Eve – 5 pm
Traditional Christmas Eve – 7 pm
Christmas Day – 10 am
Traditional Service – 9 am

Friday, December 25
Sunday, December 27

ONE SERVICE ON DECEMBER 27 – 9 AM

November 9, 2020 Meeting of Redeemer Congregation Council

Teleconference via Zoom

Present: Mitch Brown, Secretary Karen Detweiler, President Laura Duval, Liz Holzapfel, Stephanie Hunter, Ellen Kennedy, Pr. Sandy Kessinger, Matthew Kratz, Vicar Hephzibah Penumaka, Roberta Pittman, Florence Ofili-Toviho, Nate Paukovits, Treasurer Rob Wenk

Excused: Will Ubben

Call to order: President Duval called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Opening Devotions: Pastor Kessinger led Council in Devotions.

Adoption of Agenda: Agenda adopted as sent out in the read-a-heads.

Pastoral Report & Vicar's Report: In terms of the Vicar's report, she will start to do outreach calls to families with high school youth. Both attended the Boundaries training as mandated by the Synod.

Pastor reported that we had people praying throughout the entire Day of Prayer for the Nation on the Monday prior to the elections. One of our young members is preparing for her First Communion. During Advent Pr. Kessinger is organizing a 30-minute time of prayer to take place each Wednesday. Blue Christmas will be held as in past years, at 2 PM on Sunday, December 20. Pr. Kessinger is still working through when to do Christmas Eve Services. Christmas Day will be at 10 am. Pr. Kessinger is working on goals for 2021 and will work on internship papers. Florence Ofili-Toviho was part of the Book Club that read *Devil in the Grove* and found it worthwhile. The group continues to meet and keep up with each other until they read a different book in January. There are two Book Clubs going on right now. Pr. Kessinger has a prayer concern for a colleague in Pittsburgh who may have COVID-19. She anticipates a trip to CA to see her daughter in 2021.

Approval of Minutes: Mitch Brown moved approval of the Minutes from the October Meeting of the Church Council; Matthew Kratz seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Rob Wenk reported that October contributions were similar to the last two years. Pre-school and After School use fees are carried forward as we are not collecting them now. MOJO has sent in some payments for facilities (gym) use. We are in a good position going into November and December. We maintain prayerful thoughts that the congregation's generosity will continue. We anticipate continuing to decrease our outstanding debt balance.

For Council Action:

Health Equity Team: Nate Paukovits indicated there are no updates to report. They will meet soon to review the working document that is our guide for those using our church building.

The Preschool Program Board: Mitch Brown serves as the Council Liaison to the Preschool Board. As President Duval had requested, Tammie Koenig provided a list of the people currently on the Preschool Board and identified those who have moved off the Board. President Duval will provide names of candidates to join the board to align with the Congregational Constitution requirements. Tammie is seeking out input and ideas from the community. The survey was sent to Redeemer members and current/former families associated with the Preschool. Tammie Koenig and Linda McConnaughay will be invited to the December Council meeting. Rob will present the preschool's summary financial information and enrollment in readaheads to the Council ahead of the December Council meeting. That will speak to the trendlines of concern to the Council. Our discussion in December will focus on the longer term trendlines. Council has asked for specific information. Council will need to be prepared for discussion ahead of the Annual Meeting and Spring registration.

Nominating Council and Endowment Committee Members: Matthew Kratz is chairing the Committee on Nominations for Council and Endowment Committee members. If anyone has suggestions of people to reach out to, please let him know. Soon he will call a meeting via Zoom.

We also need to have someone on Council next year who could eventually take on the Treasurer role. The accounting is done through Sara so the person we seek needs to have business skills. Please let Rob Wenk or Matthew Kratz know of candidates.

Boy Scouts: Under their bankruptcy process, the Boy Scouts (AKA: Scouts BSA) have a deadline of November 16 for claims to be filed in relation to their abuse cases. We will file a general Proof of Claim to ensure that Redeemer is protected if someone brings a case and the Boy Scouts' assets are exhausted. Mr. Paul Lettow will help us if we have questions about the form. In general we would like to have a sense of who within the congregation has relevant legal domain expertise. Rob Wenk would appreciate Council identifying people.

Christmas Eve Services: Pastor is contemplating having two Christmas Eve services, one Traditional and one Contemporary, rather than our usual four services. We need to retain the ability to do contact tracing if necessary. If both services were full (in terms of the maximum number allowed) then we could add a third service.

Zoom Annual Meeting: Vicar Hephzibah, Karen Detweiler, and Laura Duval met to develop a way forward for an annual meeting that would be held via Zoom on Feb. 7 at 1 PM. We believe that with proper planning we can make this a good meeting. We will enlist volunteers in helping people learn to use Zoom. We want to ensure that members who don't have computer access can call in by phone. Vicar Hephzibah has tested that call-in procedure.

The construction firm for Sunrise has asked us for 50 parking places. As earlier agreed, we suggest they use the overgrown area on the edge of our property for parking and then they would landscape afterward.

Ministry Programs Report:

Afterschool program team has not met yet.
Faith Formation classes are going quite well.

New Business: None.

Announcement: Council Members should anticipate an email vote on Preschool and After-school Program Boards prior to the December Council meeting.

Closing Prayer: Pastor Kessinger led Council in prayer, emphasizing healing for individuals, for our nation, and for our nation's relationships with the rest of the world.

Adjournment: President Duval adjourned the meeting at 9:07 PM.

Next meeting of Council: December 14, 2020

Next meeting of Executive Committee: December 1, 2020

Grace and Peace to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

I hope you all had a safe and Happy Thanksgiving. After living in New York for almost 20 years, I believe New York's Christmas celebrations has created a deeper love for this holiday season. There's something special about this season whether it's through Christmas songs/movies that depict ideal Christmas celebrations, the beautiful decorations in our homes and the public that give us a sense of joy or perfect presents we have spent hours to find or buy. In New York, there's always something to do in the city aka Manhattan. Although I'll miss seeing the giant Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center or The Christmas Spectacular at the Radio City Music Hall, it's the fellowships that I will miss the most. I'll miss singing favorite hymns with church members while we decorate the sanctuary and Christmas tree. I'll miss seeing friends and members I haven't seen throughout the year(s). I'll miss being in a full church where we will all celebrate the birth of Jesus, our Savior.

Therefore, I am looking forward to Advent more this year than I did in the past. This season of hope as we prepare for Christ's coming through powerful readings from Isaiah, the lighting of the symbolic candles on the Advent Wreath and messages of a promise fulfilled by God through the birth of God's Son. However, hope looks different this year. Hope feels more desperate as we are all anxious of the unknown future for our nation and world. I cling to hope that the vaccines will come sooner so the majority of the population can be safe from this deadly pandemic that has hurt us in so many ways than we have imagined. I cling to hope that I can soon visit family members in the states or back home in India, where we were to be supposed to hold a memorial service for my grandfather over the Summer. I cling to the hope that families and individuals no longer have to starve, depend on food drives, live in fear of being evicted, and worry about what tomorrow holds for them. I cling to the hope that teachers and students will feel safe to go back to school and have a wonderful academic year. I cling to the hope that no more medical professionals will die from COVID and will have the rest they need as they are overworked. Most of all, I cling to the hope that we as a community in Redeemer can gather together for worship and fellowship without masks and to sing as much hymns as we would like.

Therefore, I wait in anticipation, with hope and faith that soon we can be together again, and life will go back to a time where we don't live in constant fear. I hope we can all use this time to reflect on this year and the year to come so when the future generations ask us what it was like to live in a pandemic, we can say with assurance that we did all things through Christ who strengthened us through hope, peace, joy and love. Until then, let us wait in hope.

I would like to wish you and your loved ones a safe and Merry Christmas!

In Peace, Vicar Hephzibah Penumaka

Lutheranism and Race - The 2020 Luther Colloquy

Racism in America is a powerful, pervasive, and deadly force. What resources for thinking about race and racism are found in the Lutheran theological tradition? What lessons must we learn from Lutheran history? How can the church combat racism in our midst and be a prophetic witness against racism in our society? Click the link below to replay the video of the virtual colloquy which took place at United Lutheran Seminary (ULS) on October 28.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYDjluzgOIE&t=53s>

It features an introduction by seminary president R. Guy Irwin and Dr. Vincent Evener, Associate Professor of Reformation and Luther Studies at ULS, followed by three different presenters, as listed below.

1. Anthony Bateza, Assistant Professor of Religion and RACE Program Advisor, St. Olaf College on *Bearing Witness Against Unbearable Whiteness - Lessons from Luther to Confronting Racism Today*
2. Linda E. Thomas, Professor of Theology and Anthropology, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago on *A Womanist Perspective on Racial Justice*

Dr. Maria E. Erling, Professor of Modern Church History and Global Mission, United Lutheran Seminary on *American Lutherans Debate Slavery*

Tax Advantaged Giving

As we approach the end of the year, we want to make sure that you are aware of the tax advantage of giving appreciated stocks or mutual fund shares directly to Redeemer. It really is a win-win opportunity for you and the church. This method of giving allows you to minimize capital gains taxes and yet provides the full current value and financial benefits to the programs and ministries that you care about at Redeemer. What a great way to share a portion of the blessings in your life.

If you have stocks or mutual funds that have appreciated significantly, rather than selling those assets and potentially incurring a large capital gain tax bill, those investments can be simply gifted to the church. It is an easy way to help the church meet our expense obligations for the year.

Sara Nail, Redeemer's Financial Coordinator, can help answer questions for you about this transfer process at 703/356-3346 or at sara@redeemermclean.org. Also, you can visit Redeemer's website and at the top of the page there is a tab labeled "About Us" and a following tab for "Give Online". In the subsequent description, there are stock and mutual fund donation instructions and forms available. Thank you!

RLP - Dining for Dollars

Redeemer Lutheran Preschool invites you & your friends to our next **Dining for Dollars on Wednesday, December 16 from 4-8 PM** at the McLean Chipotle! The address is 6707 Old Dominion Drive. The flyer is available in Crossroads or [RLP Chipotle Fundraiser 121620.pdf](#). RLP receives a 33% donation when you show the flyer, mention when RLP to the cashier or use the code 4PWVWHW in promo field for online orders. If you have any questions, please email us at RLPMcLean@gmail.com

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service Christmas Actions

For the sixth year, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) will distribute gifts to children of all ages in detention centers around the United States and at shelters along the border. Cards again will be sent to children and families.

Last year, nearly 16,000 cards were provided to children/families and more than 1,500 gifts were given to children. You can help this year by making cards and/or giving donations for gifts that LIRS volunteers will purchase. Suggestions for making cards and links for financial contributions are found at <https://www.lirs.org/take-action/hope-for-the-holidays/>

The deadline for submitting your handmade cards is December 11. Financial donations can be made until mid-Dec.

Your November Ham Report

On November 5, Rick Stewart delivered 7 boxes of ham weighing 245 pounds to Martha's Table from the Falls Church and Fairfax Honey Baked Ham stores.

On November 13, Laura Wareham delivered 4 boxes of ham weighing 140 pounds to Food for Others from the Falls Church store.

On November 19, Ralph Dutrow delivered 2 boxes of ham weighing 70 pounds to So Others Might Eat from the Fairfax store.

So for the month of November we delivered 455 pounds of ham. That brings our annual total to 20,518 pounds of ham. The breakdown for the year is MANNA, 6,235 pounds; Food for Others, 5,490 pounds; SOME, 3,423 pounds; Martha's Table, 2,520 pounds; ThriveDC, 1,460 pounds; Rising Hope Church, 660 pounds; CFLS, 430 pounds and N Street Village, 300 pounds. All weights are approximate.

With Christmas right around the corner, we are hoping to deliver record amounts of ham in December. That way we can make the holidays bright for as many people as possible. Thanks to all for their hard work in our outreach program.

A Very Happy Birthday to...



Tom Jordan Kanski	12/1	Addison Mosher	12/15	Jack Derr	12/26
Luther Markwart	12/1	Anna Paukovits	12/15	Robert Erickson	12/26
Gordon Thomas	12/1	Douglas Scheffler	12/15	Matthew Kratz	12/26
Alexander Devlin	12/3	Samuel Heier	12/16	Whitney Skochko	12/26
Bree Dilaman	12/3	Holley Miller	12/16	Timothy Stoessel	12/26
Kirsten Shelsta	12/3	Reid Cavanaugh	12/17	Lon Augustenborg	12/27
Madeleine Shelsta	12/3	Patricia Mogannam	12/17	Joyce Clarke	12/27
Katherine McGuire	12/4	Henry Bourgin	12/18	Jennifer Hall	12/27
Marie Born	12/5	Jacob Daly	12/18	Matt Osifchin	12/27
Laura DeGrafft	12/5	Joseph Horsfield	12/18	Leia Reynolds	12/27
Andy Wu	12/5	Marti Hopler	12/19	Andrea Brown	12/28
Ann Lawrence	12/6	Evan Humes	12/19	Lori O'Brien	12/28
Gretchen Gniffke	12/7	Ryan Kim	12/19	Alexander Dempsey	12/29
Lewis Miller	12/7	Jada Koerner	12/19	Hamilton Loving	12/29
Annika Richardson	12/7	Mark Mykityshyn	12/19	Marie Moser	12/29
Erik Richardson	12/7	Casey Kight	12/20	Israel Toviho	12/29
Richard Lee	12/8	Mae Miyamoto	12/20	Shawna Tunnell	12/29
Geraldine Swarm	12/8	Luke Russo	12/20	Steve Walker	12/29
Catherine Brennan	12/9	Ellen Sullivan	12/20	Addie Brown	12/30
Mark Krieger	12/9	Thomas Derr	12/21	John Dietrich	12/30
Mia Sande	12/9	Karen Detweiler	12/21	McKenna Klontz	12/30
Elizabeth Pleasant	12/10	Jeffrey Hahne	12/21	Andrew Lee	12/30
Justin Etkin	12/12	Joel Ratliff	12/21	Diane Liesman	12/30
Kirk Odegard	12/12	Kirsten Leonard	12/22	Samantha O'Brien	12/30
Paula Green	12/13	Roger Dahlin	12/23	Clinton Pfister	12/30
Ellen Kennedy	12/13	Marcia Doherty	12/23	Katherine Waldron	12/30
Gavin Cassell	12/14	Peter Kratz	12/23	Megan DeGrafft	12/31
Raymond Jacobsen	12/14	Anna Ross	12/23	Marie Morris	12/31
John Jones	12/14	Ramona Rovito	12/23	Janet Pfister	12/31
Lauren Thronson	12/14	Laura Broderdorf	12/24	Elizabeth Reed	12/31
Michael Honigberg	12/15	Michael Muhlenberg	12/24	Philip Schoepfle	12/31
James Leimkuhler	12/15	Robert Hahne	12/25	Elaine Shelleman	12/31
		Holly Lind	12/25		

