

# ***TIDINGS*** **Newsletter**

Redeemer Lutheran Church  
1545 Chain Bridge Road  
McLean, VA 22101

Vol. 71 No. 2  
February 2026



Our mission is to share Christ's love  
with the greatest number of people.

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**A Message from  
Pastor Sharon Core**



**Journey  
February 2026**

By the time you read this (on or around February 1), Nick and I will be in Wellington, NZ (the date may be the same—jump forward 18 hours—so maybe the next day!). We have friends who live in Wellington—they'll be there until September and so, when you have friends in a place you've always wanted to visit, you plan a visit! However, we did not plan for snow and at the time I am typing this (January 21), we are changing a Sunday flight out of Dulles to a Saturday flight out of Dulles! Future Sharon of February 1 (or thereabouts) will be marveling at our journey thus far.

Journeys are like that—some we plan for and they go according to plan. Some we plan for and they don't go quite according to plan. Others present themselves as opportunities and we choose whether or not to engage.

As a faith community, you are in the midst of a couple of journeys. One is the interim journey—we have been together almost 6 months in this in-between time. I am grateful for the welcome I have received and am enjoying the time we are spending together. Even with the good fellowship and relationships we enjoy, you are keeping an eye forward, ready to begin the work the transition team is planning. I am quite impressed with those on this team and am heartened by their commitment, energy and focus. You will be hearing more from them and I encourage you to take their communications to heart—giving time and attention to the survey and then making yourself available for the upcoming small group meetings. Each one of you is necessary in providing information that the call committee will use to put together the ministry site profile. It will not be complete unless you add your thoughts. So, please do!

The other journey we are about to undertake is the Lenten one. Ash Wednesday is February 18—at noon and at 7:00 p.m. we will gather for worship to mark the beginning of this journey. During this time, we will be reminded of our own mortality, the ways we are tempted to turn away from God, our need for repentance and mercy, the call to prayer and self-examination. It is not an easy journey to make and so it is good we make it together.

Often you hear people say “what are you giving up for Lent?” I invite you to reframe that question: “what are you taking on? what practice will you try? what is one thing you would like to examine about your spiritual life?” It may be that reflections on these questions will be markers for your journey.

I am sure I will have many stories to tell about our journey down under. There will be more pictures than any one person should endure! I look forward to sharing some of them with you. And I look forward to continuing with you along the interim journey. The God we meet and follow as we make the Lenten journey is the one who gives us strength and direction for all the other journeys we make.

Blessings,  
Pastor Sharon



## SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Traditional worship services at 8:30 am and 11:00 am  
Contemporary worship service at 9:45 am  
Faith Formation, Confirmation, and High School classes– 9:45 am  
Table Talk (Adult Class in Conference Room) – 9:45 am

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## WEEKLY EVENTS

Sundays	Youth Choir Rehearsal (Music Suite B) – 10:55 am
Mondays	Social Justice and Equity Book Club (Zoom) – 7:30 pm
Tuesdays	Women’s Faith Group (Conference Room/Zoom) – 9:30 am
Thursdays	Bible Study (Zoom) – 8:00 am Bell Choir Rehearsal (Music Suite A) – 7:00 pm Traditional Choir Practice (Music Suite B) – 7:45 pm

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## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

### Week of February 1

Wednesday, February 4	Quilting Group (Fellowship Hall) – 9 am
Thursday, February 5	Prayer Shawl Ministry (Conference Room/Zoom)–10:30 am

### Week of February 8

Monday, February 9	Congregation Council (Conference Room/Zoom) – 7:30 pm
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### Week of February 15

Sunday, February 15	Bishop Hirsch Visit and Lunch
Tuesday, February 17	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper (Gym) – 6 pm
Wednesday, February 18	Quilting Group (Fellowship Hall) – 9 am Ash Wednesday Service – 12 pm Lenten Dinner (Fellowship Hall) – 6:15 pm Ash Wednesday Service – 7 pm
Thursday, February 19	Prayer Shawl Ministry (Conference Room/Zoom)–10:30 am

### Week of February 22

Sunday, February 22	Youth Service Project (Fellowship Hall) – 10:45 am Annual Congregation Meeting – 12 pm
Wednesday, February 25	Lenten Dinner (Fellowship Hall) – 6:15 pm Lenten Evening Prayer – 7 pm

**Minutes: January 12, 2026, Meeting of Congregation Council  
RLC Conference Room and via Zoom**

**Council Members Present in Person:** Annabelle Allard; Steve Bott, Treasurer; Pastor Sharon Core, Interim Pastor; Sabine Detweiller, Vice President; Sarah Getter; Chris Hernadi, Secretary; Victoria Johnson; Lena Martikainen; Karen Miller, President; Gene Morrow; Tyler Posey

**Council Members Attending via Zoom:** Sarah Getter

**Council Members Absent and Excused:** Lee Cronin; Megan Kratz

**Call to order.** Karen Miller called the meeting to order at 7:35

**Opening Devotions.** Pastor Core led opening devotions with a reflection of “Togetherness”, which was her Star Word from the Epiphany service, along with a reading of a portion of Peter’s sermon after Pentecost from Acts. Pastor Core ended with prayer.

**Approval of Minutes.** Minutes from the meeting were previously approved by email.

**Adoption of Agenda.** The agenda, as emailed in advance of the meeting, was approved by the Council.

**Executive Committee Summary.** The Executive Committee met on January 7 and talked about the items on tonight’s agenda.

**General Updates from Pastor Core.** Pastor Core highlighted her discussions with individual members and the efforts of the Stewardship Committee. She also affirmed her availability and accessibility to visit and provide pastoral care to those who are ill or unable to attend services. She encourages everyone to approach her with such needs as they are comfortable.

**Treasurer’s Report.** Treasurer Steve Bott presented the 2025 Financial Summary through December 31, which was made available via email prior to the meeting. Redeemer ended the year with a surplus of \$10,000, thanks to generous contributions that came in the month of December. Giving for the year was significantly down from previous years, however, and we leaned heavily on increased facility usage to offset under-budget contributions.

**Discussion Item: Pledge Plans for 2026.** Pastor Core shared that Sunday, January 18, will be dedicated as the day when congregants share their intentions for church offering. She invited discussion on how pledges could be collected during the services.

**Discussion Item: Nominating Committee for Council and Endowment.** Sarah Getter and Lena Martikainen are stepping down from Council in January, and their replacements, along with the candidacies of the renewing Council members, will need to be approved by the Congregation at the Annual Meeting. Karen Miller noted that Nate Paukovits and Ellen Kennedy will join the nominating committee to identify candidates. Karen asked Council to get back to her with suggestions for candidates for the two open positions.

The Endowment Committee has several possible candidates for the one open position. The position will also need to be approved by the Congregation at the Annual Meeting.

**Discussion Item: Annual Meeting.** The Annual meeting is scheduled for February 22. Agenda items will include a presentation of ministry reports, discussion and approval of the budget and constitution amendments, election of candidates for the open and renewing positions on Council and on the Endowment Committee, and an update on progress and path forward for the construction project. Bios of the candidates for the open positions on Council and Endowment and of the candidates for the renewing Council positions will be available prior to the meeting.

**Approval Item: Constitutional Amendment.** Tyler Posey and Sarah Getter led the discussion of the proposed edits and updates to Redeemer's constitution. Some are needed to align Redeemer's constitution with the Churchwide Model Constitution, while others are proposed to better align with Redeemer's functional reality. The revised draft was emailed to council members prior to the meeting. Tyler and Sarah acknowledged Judy Kuhagen for her contributions to the revision process.

After discussion, Karen made the motion for Council to approve the revisions to the constitution and submit them as presented for Congregational approval at the Annual Meeting. Lena Martikainen seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously by Council.

**Discussion Item: Transition Team Update.** Karen Miller reported that the Transition Team has been meeting regularly and are currently working on a survey with the intention of releasing it to the Congregation by the end of the month. Tuesdays will be designated as "Transition Tuesday" to provide a systematic way to target communication and provide transparency as the Team makes progress towards crafting a Site Profile for the call for a new pastor.

**Discussion Item: Nominating Team for Call Committee.** Karen Miller reiterated that the Call Committee will require eight members, which could include members of the Transition Team, who must be approved by the Congregation. In order to provide enough time and space for the Transition Committee to complete their work, it was suggested that the Call Committee candidates be approved in a special meeting following the Annual Meeting. The work and progress of the Transition Committee will be communicated regularly to the Congregation in the interim.

**Discussion Item: Update on Youth Activities.** Annabelle Allard reported that this year's Youth Sunday events drew an increase in participation from last year. Victoria Johnson reported that the youth leadership team met to plan for service activities this month.

**Discussion Item: Lenten Dinners.** Council is scheduled to host the Lenten dinner on February 18, Ash Wednesday. A Sign-up genius will be distributed prior to the dinner to organize the potluck.

**Ministry Reports:** None

**New Business.** None

**Close with Prayer and adjourn at 8:56.**

**Upcoming Dates:**

- Executive Committee, February 4, 2026
- Next Meeting of Council, February 9, 2026
- Bishop Phil Hirsch Visit, February 15, 2025
- Pancake Supper, February 17, 2026
- Ash Wednesday and Dinner, February 18, 2026
- Annual Meeting, February 22, 2026

## Construction Project Updates from January

The abatement process in the office wing has been completed and certified by the inspector. The demolition will continue with the removal of the old wood paneling and boiler pipes in the offices. Doors and door frames between the offices will be taken out, which contributed to the sound problem between the offices. The electrician will remove some of the electrical wiring extensions that were installed over the years that do not meet code requirements. The original concrete floor in the hallway (which used to be an exterior sidewalk) will be leveled in order to allow the installation of new floor tiles.

With the construction that is underway in the old office wing, access on Sundays to the Music Suites and Kitchen will be through either the Fellowship Hall or the Gym. Starting at 9:45 AM when the Confirmation Class is in session in the Fellowship Hall, access will need to be through the Gym. Also, the old bathrooms in the office hallway are now closed but the bathrooms across from the Gym are available or the accessible bathroom off of the Crossroads lobby is also available. Signs will be posted to help direct you.

A reminder that the visitor's entrance on Mondays to Fridays is now Door #15 on the Chain Bridge Road side of the building. If you have been issued a door fob, it will still work at Door #10 on the Westmoreland Street side of the building. However, as additional construction work is done on that entrance area, there may be times you will be redirected to Door #15. Visitors and Members should not use Door #1, the Preschool main entrance on the Chain Bridge side, during daytime hours Monday through Friday due to our safety and security procedures for the Preschool.

Currently, every two weeks there is a meeting with the General Contractor and the Architect to review the construction progress. As a result of the last meeting of the month, there is a billing to the church for the work completed and the materials purchased to date. Those payments are made from your previous donations to the capital campaign. Your gifts now to the capital campaign will delay the need to use borrowed funds and reduce our interest costs.

## Better Hearing Tips in Redeemer's Sanctuary

- 1. Sit directly in front of a speaker.** There are four speakers in the sanctuary (two on each side). The speakers are tall, thin, tan-colored, and mounted to the wall. It is advised for better hearing to sit at the end of the pew, closest to the wall, and facing a speaker as the sound comes directly from them.
- 2. Avoid sitting where the sound is less clear.** If you are in a pew where the closest speaker is behind you (not pointed directly at you) the sound will be traveling away from you, and you will not hear as well. Also, if a wall column partially blocks your view of the speaker, then it is partially blocking the sound from that speaker.
- 3. Use one of our sound amplifiers.** The sound system operator can provide you with a battery-operated device that amplifies the sound coming from the sound system. They come with a plug that goes directly into your ear. We have several extra ear plugs, and you can keep one with you and re-attach it yourself to the device each week, if you prefer.
- 4. Sit in one of the first few pews.** In addition to the recommendations above, some people find they hear better the closer they are to the front. It may be especially helpful to sit directly in front of the pulpit for the sermon. At the same time, please keep in mind the recommendation described in Item #1 above and be as close as possible to one of the speakers that is facing towards you.

The sound system operators do their best to keep the sound volume as high as possible without it becoming too loud and discomforting for other people in attendance. Thank you for your understanding and we hope these recommendations are helpful to you.

# HAPPENING AT REDEEMER

## Redeemer Financial Results for 2025

As announced in November and December, Redeemer was facing a significant financial shortfall for 2025. Through the generosity of this congregation, we were able to meet our expenses with about \$10,000 left over. About 21% of all giving for the entire year came in the month of December. A resounding Thank You to everyone who found ways to support our end of year financial push. The excess funds will be applied against current expenses for 2026.

## Social Justice and Equity Book Club New Book February 9

Redeemer's Social Justice & Equity Book Club would like to remind those that have books checked out from our lending cart to please return them to the cart once read so others can read them too! Thank you! We are starting a new book "The Cost of Free Land" by Rebecca Clarren for discussion on February 9. Anyone is welcome to join us and this would be a good time to do so! We meet every Monday via zoom @ 7:30pm - 8:30 pm. Please contact [Teresa Schellenger](#) for more info.

## Good Beginnings at Redeemer Renaissance Preschool Outdoor Classes for Ages 1.5 and older with Caregiver February 10 & 24 –9:30 am

Come and play! This outdoor-play program for toddlers and caregivers to enjoy together promotes a sense of wonder, discovery, and exploration while providing a fun introduction to preschool. Children will build their first friendships and work with new materials as they engage in open-ended play in a safe, developmentally appropriate environment. During exploratory play, caregivers will have the opportunity to discuss topics of interest and create bonds that will help them navigate the early childhood years and beyond.

The class is offered on the following dates: Feb. 10 & 24, Mar. 10 & 24, April 7 & 21, and May 5 & 19.

Register [online](#) or call 703-356-3567  
for more information.



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### AGES

Children 1.5 years and older  
may enroll and attend with a  
parent or caregiver.\*

### TUITION

\$350/child/15 Class Sessions

### TUESDAYS at 9:30 AM

October 14 & 28  
November 18 & 25  
December 9  
January 13 & 27

February 10 & 24  
March 10 & 24  
April 7 & 21  
May 5 & 19

**REGISTER [online](#) or call 703-356-3567 for more information.**

Good Beginnings will take place outdoors in small groups and space will be limited.  
\*Children must be 1.5 years old by Good Beginnings start date.





## Bishop Hirsch Visit and Lunch February 15

The Metro D.C. Synod Bishop, Bishop Hirsch, will visit Redeemer to preach and preside on February 15. A lunch in Fellowship Hall will follow services. We encourage you to come and worship as a family this Sunday. If you would like to join for lunch please RSVP at this [link](#).

A background image featuring a wooden cross with a purple cloth draped over it, set against a light, patterned background with green foliage on the left and right sides.

## Wednesday Lenten Services & Dinners

**February 18**  
Ash Wednesday Services - 12 pm and 7 pm  
Ash Wednesday Dinner - 6:15 pm

**February 25 | March 4 | March 11,  
March 18 | March 25**  
Lenten Dinner - 6:15 pm  
Lenten Evening Prayer - 7 pm



## Redeemer Annual Meeting February 22 at 12 pm

Redeemer Annual Meeting to be Held on Sunday, February 22 - Please join Council and the Redeemer Membership for our Annual Meeting following the 11:00 service. We will review the proposed budget for 2026, hear a detailed update on our Construction Project, elect new members of council, review and vote on changes to our Constitution, and get an update from our Transition Team that is working to prepare us to call a new pastor. Your support through attendance and voting are critical to Redeemer's immediate and long-term path forward and success in sharing Christ's love with the greatest number of people. Please join us!

## Youth

### Youth Service Project February 22 at 10:45 am

We have rescheduled the service project originally planned for January 25 (cancelled due to inclement weather) for Sunday, February 22. This will take place after our youth morning classes, youth are invited to join us to pack meals for students in our community in Fellowship Hall. We will come together to pack the food and have a time of fellowship once the project is complete. Please sign up at this [link](#) if your youth will participate.

**For any questions or additional information, reach out to [Grace Howie](#).  
For more detailed youth news, please read the Youth Newsletter.**

## SOCIAL OUTREACH

### Prayer Shawl Ministry Lent: Quiet Reflection and Repetition Meetings February 5 & 19

Lent is a quiet season: providing a time to reflect, pray and meditate. Some find the repetitive nature of knitting or crocheting an aid to meditation and reflection. If you do, and would like to knit a scarf for charity, the Prayer Shawl Ministry will have yarn and scarf kits available in The Crossroads starting on February 15th. Kits include yarn, directions for a knit or crocheted scarf and online knitting and crocheting resources.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry meets on the first and third Thursdays of most months. We will meet on February 5th and 19th. The hybrid (Zoom and in person) meetings run from 10:30 am to noon. Because of the renovations, we are temporarily meeting in the conference room. Please enter the building through Door 15. In addition to prayer shawls, we knit and crochet scarves, baby blankets for baptisms and for Project Linus. All are welcome. Beginners are enthusiastically welcomed! Please email Lynn Barth at [lynnbarth@gmail.com](mailto:lynnbarth@gmail.com) for more information or for yarn.

## Britepaths

Help Our Neighbors Meet Basic Needs! Please consider donating to the Britepaths SNAP Gap Pantry

### Greatest Needs:

- Laundry detergent
- Toilet paper
- Shampoo/Conditioner/2-in-1/Shampoo for textured hair
- Deodorant
- Body wash
- Feminine hygiene products (pads/tampons)

### On-Going Needs:

- Dental hygiene: Toothpaste, toothbrushes (preferably one per package), floss, mouthwash
- Bar soap
- Razors
- Sponges
- Paper towels
- Diapers (all sizes)
- Diaper wipes
- All-purpose cleaning spray
- Dish soap

Please get in touch with Britepaths to coordinate a drop-off day and time in advance. They will meet you at 3959 Pender Drive, Suite 200, Fairfax, VA 22030 in the parking lot to collect your donation. Phone 703.273.8829 or email [info@britepaths.org](mailto:info@britepaths.org) to coordinate the time and date of your delivery.

## Little Food Pantry

### Current Little Food Pantry Needs

- All food donations are welcome, but currently, the Little Food Pantry supply is especially in need of:
  - peanut butter (plastic containers only)
  - oatmeal packets
  - hearty soups/stews
  - canned vegetables (not black or pinto beans)
  - breakfast bars.
- Volunteers are needed to help regularly restock the LFP with food that has already been collected. Contact Paula Green at [pegreen@verizon.net](mailto:pegreen@verizon.net) for more information.
- Thrivent members – did you know you can apply for (2) \$250 grants each year for great causes like the LFP? Contact your Thrivent rep for more details.



## Honeybaked Ham Food Donations

Ham run report for November and December:

November 13 Roberta Pittman delivered 130 pounds of ham from Falls Church and Fairfax to Thrive DC.

December 4 Jim Kuhagen delivered 175 pounds of ham from Fairfax to Arlington Assembly of God.

December 11 Roberta Pittman delivered 260 pounds of ham from Fairfax and Falls Church to Thrive DC.

December 18 Ralph Dutrow delivered 330 pounds of ham from Fairfax and Falls Church to So Others Might Eat.

Thank you all for helping to feed those in our community.

## Quilting Group Sewing Happiness into Every Stitch

We love what we do! The Quilting Group meets on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, from 9:00–11:30 AM in Fellowship Hall. We are a small but mighty group on a mission to share our love of sewing and make a difference through our craft.

Who We Support: Our quilts and handmade items bring comfort and care to those in need through:

- Partner for Surgery (Guatemala) – Providing medical and surgical care in rural communities. Quilts, tote bags, and bears are hand-delivered by Frank Petersen.
- Project Linus – Supporting children in Fairfax County and beyond, including:
- Lutheran World Relief – Extending our reach globally with compassion.
- Redeemer – quilts for Sunrise parishioners and our own while attending service, flannel blankets for toddler baptisms, shut-ins, or anyone else in our church family that is in need upon request

Quilt Guidelines: We follow Project Linus sizing standards,

- Baby: 36" x 36"
- Child: 42" x 60"
- Teen: 45" x 72"

We also create fleece blankets and flannel baby blankets.

Partnering with the Prayer Shawl Group: We've teamed up with the Prayer Shawl Group to make fleece blankets for Project Linus. The Quilting Group preps the fleece, and the crocheters add a beautiful edge. For Prayer Shawl info, contact [Lynn Barth](#).

How You Can Help: We are currently in need of sewers! Either in person on Wednesdays or if you cannot attend in person, we will provide you with:

- Quilt squares already designed, and marked for sewing
- Bundled quilt kits that include a sewn top, pre-cut batting and backing, yarn and/or binding)

Other ways to support:

- Monetary donations (please designate for "Quilting Group")
- Fabric, thread, and sewing supplies

Donations help us purchase batting, fabric, thread, and other essentials.

Interested? Please contact: [Darlene McCoy](#) or [Joyce Clarke](#).

## PASTOR AND STAFF OF REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH

Interim Senior Pastor	Pastor Sharon Core	ext. 102	sharon@redeermclean.org
Bell Choir Director	Waka Osifchin		waka.soprano@gmail.com
Director of Music	Matt Osifchin		mosifchi@hotmail.com
Director of Afterschool	Linda McConnaughay	ext. 106	lmconnaughay@redeermclean.org
Director of Preschool	Katrina McNair	ext. 111	preschool@redeermclean.org
Evening Facility Host	Brian Doyle		
Executive Director of Redeemer Renaissance	Linda McConnaughay	ext. 106	lmconnaughay@redeermclean.org
Facilities Director	Bill Parks	ext. 110	bparks@redeermclean.org
Financial Coordinator	Sara Nail	ext. 103	sara@redeermclean.org
Nursery Care	Bernarda Rodriguez Lusbi Pina		
Office Manager	Cynthia Finocchiaro	ext. 101	cynthia@redeermclean.org
Organist	Joy Mentzel		joymentzel@gmail.com
Pianist	Kathy Detwiler		
Youth & Communications Coordinator	Grace Howie	ext. 105	grace@redeermclean.org
Youth Choir Director	Waka Osifchin		waka.soprano@gmail.com

### CONGREGATION COUNCIL OFFICERS

President	Karen Miller
Vice President	Sabine Detweiler
Secretary	Chris Hernadi
Treasurer	Steve Bott

### CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEMBERS

Annabelle Allard  
Lee Cronin  
Sarah Getter  
Megan Kratz  
Lena Martikainen  
Gene Morrow  
Tyler Posey  
And a Youth Representative