TIDINGS Newsletter

Redeemer Lutheran Church
1545 Chain Bridge Road
McLean, VA 22101

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

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A Message from
Pastor Sharon Core

The Month of *Meh*
March 2026

At the outset, I know there are many of you who for various reasons love the month of March. I look forward to hearing your *why* as it is not my favorite month. Save for my parents' wedding anniversary (64 years on March 3) and St. Patrick's Day (who doesn't love corned beef and cabbage), March for me is the month of *meh.*

The weather is completely unpredictable! One day I'm wearing a short sleeve shirt; the next day, I'm pulling out the wool sweater (actually, I am opposed to wearing wool in March!). The ground seems to be a continuous bog. Spring shoots appear only to be waylaid by a snap in temperature. And then there is the length of the month–it seems to go on forever! How is it the 31 days of March feels twice the time as the 31 days of May?! And not to mention the whole ides of March thing!

Yeah, not a fan of the month of March–even with March Madness (but I digress). And so…what to do with this "not a fan of March" attitude? The challenge for me when I find myself with too much negativity or complaining is to STOP, take a deep breath and challenge myself to identify the good. Too much *meh* is detrimental to my spiritual and mental health–why I allow myself to venture down that path is also ripe for examination.

AHEM….good things about the month of March:

- arrival of Spring (Vernal Equinox)
- longer days (daylight savings time begins)
- Pi day
- March Madness
- Parents' anniversary
- St. Patrick's day
- Outdoor grilling begins
- signs of daffodils and tulips

And then there are those happenings within the life of the church–and especially here at Redeemer:

- Progression of Lent
- Transition team small group meetings
- Lenten dinners and vesper services
- Palm/Passion Sunday
- Sweetie Pi Dance
- Confirmation Retreat

So the month of *meh*, I mean the month of March, has much to commend itself. There are celebrations, signs of renewal, faith exploration, fellowship, encouragement. My challenge will be to keep all these in mind, in the forefront of my mind with the intention of replacing the *meh* with the marvelous.

As you pursue your own *meh*s, where do you need to reframe, reexamine, and renew?

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

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 March 1	
Monday, March 2	Redeemer Day of Prayer – 8 am to 8 pm
Wednesday, March 4	Quilting Group (Fellowship Hall) – 9 am
	Lenten Dinner (Fellowship Hall) – 6:15 pm
	Evening Prayer Service – 7 pm
Week of March 8	
Sunday, March 8	Daylight Savings
Monday, March 9	Congregation Council (Conference Room/Zoom) – 7:30 pm
Wednesday, March 11	Lenten Dinner (Fellowship Hall) – 6:15 pm
	Evening Prayer Service – 7 pm
Thursday, March 12	Prayer Shawl Ministry (Conference Room/Zoom)–10:30 am
Friday, March 13	Sweetie Pi Dance (Fellowship Hall/Gym) – 6 pm
Week of March 15	
Wednesday, March 18	Quilting Group (Fellowship Hall) – 9 am
	Lenten Dinner (Fellowship Hall) – 6:15 pm
	Evening Prayer Service – 7 pm
Thursday, March 19	Prayer Shawl Ministry (Conference Room/Zoom)–10:30 am
Saturday, March 21	Confirmation Retreat
Week of March 22	
Sunday, March 22	Youth Easter Community Outreach Event – 11 am
Wednesday, February 25	Lenten Dinner (Fellowship Hall) – 6:15 pm
	Lenten Evening Prayer – 7 pm
Week of March 29	
Sunday, March 29	Palm Sunday (*Please note no Faith Formation/Confirmation)*

Minutes: February 9, 2026, Meeting of Congregation Council
RLC Library and via Zoom

Council Members Present in Person: Annabelle Allard; Steve Bott, Treasurer; Lee Cronin; Sabine Detweiler, Vice President; Chris Hernadi, Secretary; Victoria, Youth Member; Karen Miller, President; Gene Morrow; Tyler Posey
Council Members Attending via Zoom: Megan Kratz
Council Members Absent Excused: Pastor Sharon Core, Interim Pastor; Sarah Getter; Lena Martikainen
Council Meeting Guests: None

Call to order. Karen Miller called the meeting to order at 7:33

Opening Devotions. Sabine Detweiler led opening devotions with a discussion of her Star Word: "True." The discussion drew on Biblical passages selected by Sabine and a consideration of multiple connotations of the word "true."

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 February 4 and talked about the items on tonight's agenda.

Discussion Item: General Updates. Karen Miller expressed appreciation for Pastor John Teitman's availability to preside over services during Pastor Core's absence and drew special attention to the thoughtful way he connects his sermons with life at Redeemer. Pastor Core returns for services on February 15.

Treasurer's Report. Treasurer Steve Bott presented the 2026 Financial Summary through January 31, which was made available via email prior to the meeting.Redeemer had a $20,000 surplus at the end of January, which includes the $10,000 surplus from 2025. Discussion revolved around historical patterns of giving at Redeemer and a comparison of 2026 line-item budget amounts with other years.

Discussion Item: Pledge Update. Karen Miller provided an update on the collection of intentions that took place during the drive on and around January 18. Redeemer saw an increase in the number of intentions from previous years. Council is very appreciative of the generosity of those who declared their intention to give.

Discussion Item: Results of Nominating Committee for Council and Endowment Committee. Karen Miller reported that the Nominating Committee for Council identified Sara Egeland and David Broderdorf as candidates for the two open positions. Lara Paukovits will be the candidate for the open position on the Endowment Committee. All candidates will need to be approved by vote of the Congregation at the Annual meeting. Council expressed gratitude for all three individuals for volunteering to serve.

Discussion Item: Review of Annual Meeting Agenda and Plan for Meeting. The agenda for the Annual Meeting and the Annual Report were emailed to Council in advance of the meeting. Karen reviewed each item on the agenda with Council.

Discussion Item: Constitutional Updates. As a follow-up to the previous Council meeting when proposed constitutional modifications were approved, Karen reviewed the two customary methods for obtaining Congregational approval of these modifications: by continuing resolution or by amendment. Given that the non-required modifications reflect ongoing customs and practices that are already established in the Redeemer community, and also given that the required modifications are requirements established by the DC Synod, Council agreed that these modifications should be approved as amendments. The amendments will be presented at the Annual Meeting for Congregational approval.

Discussion Item: Transition Team Progress. Karen Miller reported that the Transition Team is carefully analyzing the over 80 responses to the survey that was recently distributed within the Congregation. The Transition Team is still collecting data and making a significant effort to ensure that the body of responses are reflective of the entire Redeemer community.

Discussion Item: Nominating Team for Call Committee. Work on this project will be tabled until March, with a tentative target date of mid-June for submitting the Mission Site Profile (MSP) as part of the call process.

Discussion Item: Youth News. Annabelle Allard led the discussion and reported that the next youth ministry activity is scheduled for February 22. Details on additional youth activities are being worked out and updates will be forthcoming.

Discussion Item: Spiritual Nurture. The Lenten Retreat for February 21 has been cancelled.

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. Services will be held following the dinner. Dinner starts at 6:15, set up begins at 6:00, and the service will start at 7:00. Karen will be unable to attend due to a previously scheduled conflict.

Discussion Item: Bishop Visit. Bishop Phil Hirsch will visit Redeemer on February 15. He will preach and preside at all three services, and a lunch will be scheduled following the 11:00 session.

Discussion Item: Departing Council Members. Council acknowledged the contributions of departing members Lena Martikainen and Sarah Getter. Karen and the entire Council expressed thanks to both Lena and Sarah for their service and dedication.

Ministry Reports: Music and Worship. Sabine Detweiler reported that the recent meeting of the Music and Worship committee focused on securing coverage during Pastor Core's absence, services for Ash Wednesday, and Bishop Hirsch's visit on February 15th.

Ministry Reports: Fellowship. Council discussed the challenges of reconciling the desire to gather outside of services with the constraints on people's time and energy which make it difficult to organize opportunities to do so. It was noted that this is a challenge felt nation-wide, as reflected in the variety of media articles and podcasts on the topic.

New Business: Karen Miller and Council thanked Victoria for her thoughtful input and participation in Council this year as the youth representative on Council.

Close with Prayer and adjourn at 8:31.

Upcoming Dates:

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

Construction Project Updates from February

The recent construction activity in the office wing includes removing all the old tile and fixtures in the hallway bathroom, installing new electrical wiring for the HVAC system, starting the skim coating of the cement block walls, removing a cement block wall that was apparently added between two offices after the church's original construction and was not properly secure on the top or sides; therefore for safety reasons it was removed and will be rebuilt with improved sound absorption.

A reminder that the office visitor's entrance during the workday 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 in 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.

The outdoor phase of our construction project involves the renovation of the playground area and the addition of a columbarium. We sent out RFPs (Request for Proposals) to several area general contractors, including the firm that is currently doing our interior building renovations. Unfortunately, the bid for the playground renovation has come back much higher than we were expecting. The construction budget for the outdoor work was based on two rounds of estimates done during the design phase from an independent estimator. However, additional county requirements for stormwater management and tree protections and annual rising costs have led to this situation. We are currently working with our architects, engineers and the general contractors to determine how we can reduce the cost for the natural play area and develop a plan for a path forward.

We are approximately halfway through the completion of the office wing renovations. Your on-going financial support of this construction project is very much appreciated. As you consider other ways to support the work that is underway, please think about one of the tax advantaged giving options. The gifting of appreciated stocks or mutual funds will help minimize your capital gain taxes. Also, the gifting of an IRA's Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) can also lower your taxable income. See Redeemer's website under the additional "Giving" heading for more information. This is an option for your regular planned giving to the church too.

HAPPENING AT REDEEMER

Redeemer Day of Prayer
March 2 – 8 am to 8 pm

You're invited to join others on Monday, March 2, to be part of Redeemer's next quarterly Day of Prayer.

Our theme for March 2 is twofold:

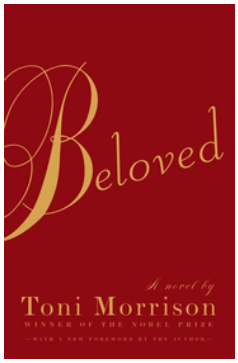
- that leaders in our country and around the world will work together to stop war, heal divisions among us, and care for all their people; and,
- that we can heal divisions and work towards peace and wellbeing in our lives and the lives of those around us.

To be part of the Day of Prayer: sign up for a half-hour segment between 8:00 am and 8:00 pm to be part of the goal of us praying continuously throughout the day. Either use this link or call the church office (703-356-3346) to claim a time slot. You can pray at Redeemer or from home, school, or office.

A resource document consisting of prayers written by Redeemer members and others, scripture selections, and audio files is available here.

Social Justice and Equity Book Club
New Book March 2

The Social Justice & Equity Book Club is just finishing up another great book "The Cost of Free Land" by Rebecca Clarren and we will be starting a new book on March 2 "Beloved" by Toni Morrison. Anyone is welcome to join us and this would be a good time to do so! We meet every Monday via zoom @ 7:30pm - 8:30pm. Please contact **Teresa Schellenger** for more info.



Wednesday Dinners and Services during Lent
March 4 | March 11 | March 18 | March 25

Dinner at 6:15 pm followed by an Evening Prayer Service at 7 pm.

- March 4- Dinner hosted by TableTalk
- March 11- Dinner hosted by Redeemer's Greeters
- March 18- Dinner hosted by the Transition Team

Livestream link for 7 pm evening prayer service: https://vimeo.com/event/5733312

Young Adult Group
March 9 – 7 pm

Young adults are invited to attend our regular meetings at on Tuesday evenings from 7 to 9 pm.

- **March 9**
- **April 13**
- **May 11**

This group is open to those between the ages of 19 to 39-ish, but if you feel you are a young adult, you are welcome to attend! This group is a partnership between Redeemer, Lewinsville, and Immanuel Presbyterian Church. For more information, please contact Grace Howie.

Good Beginnings at Redeemer Renaissance Preschool
Outdoor Classes for Ages 1.5 and older with Caregiver
March 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: Mar. 10 & 24, April 7 & 21, and May 5 & 19.

Register online or call 703-356-3567
for more information.

Redeemer Renaissance Preschool & After-School Open House
March 14 – 10:30 to 11:30 am

Join us on Saturday, March 14 from 10:30 to 11:30 am for an Open House showcasing all Redeemer Renaissance has to offer! Classes for 2's, 3's, and 4's are offered morning and all-day classes.

Registration for the 2026-2027 School Year is currently open!

For questions or more information, please call 703-365-3567.

New Members Class
March 15 – 12 pm

We are holding a new members class on March 15 after the 11:00 service. Lunch is included. Anyone interested in joining Redeemer or curious about the church is invited to attend. Please RSVP to sharon@redeemermclean.org.

Restaurant Night at Chipotle
March 18 – 4 to 8 pm

Join us for a restaurant fundraiser at Chipotle! Order online or for pickup using code CHXGL6C or show the flyer in restaurant!

Youth

Sweetie Pi Dance – An invitation for all RLC Families!
March 13 – 6 to 7:30 pm

Join us to bring out your child's best through music at the Sweetie Pi Dance for RLC and Redeemer Renaissance families! Bring your sweeties to experience the magic where dance meets the charm of Sweetie Pi in the form of pizzas and pies.

Please use this link to let us know you'll bring a pie to share.

Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Youth

Important Dates:

March 21 – Confirmation Retreat
March 21 – Metro D.C. Synod Play + Pray Event for High Schoolers
March 22 – Easter Community Outreach Event
March 29 – Palm Sunday: No Faith Formation/Confirmation

Sign up at to join the Youth Ministry team at this link.

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 March 12 and 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 will be meeting on the second and third Thursdays this month, March 12 and 19. The hybrid (Zoom and in person) meetings run from 10:30 am to noon. Because of the renovations, we are meeting in the conference room instead of the library. Please enter the building through door 15. In addition to prayer shawls, we knit and crochet scarves, as well as baby blankets for baptisms and for project Linus. All are welcome. Please contact Lynn Barth for more information or for yarn.

Partner For Surgery

We have a new request from this important ministry benefitting Guatemalan children undergoing cleft palate repair. In addition to the usual infant supplies that we provide, the program has asked for a total of 45 Medela Harmony Manual breast pumps. We've already gotten 25 but need help to get to our goal. Donations can be left in Crossroads or by using the Amazon link here or the QR code below.

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 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.

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 Peterson.
- Project Linus – Supporting children in Fairfax County and beyond.
- 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@redeemermclean.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	lmcconnaughay@redeemermclean.org
Director of Preschool	Katrina McNair	ext. 111	preschool@redeemermclean.org
Evening Facility Host	Brian Doyle		
Executive Director of Redeemer Renaissance	Linda McConnaughay	ext. 106	lmcconnaughay@redeemermclean.org
Facilities Director	Bill Parks	ext. 110	bparks@redeemermclean.org
Financial Coordinator	Sara Nail	ext. 103	sara@redeemermclean.org
Nursery Care	Bernarda Rodriguez		
Office Manager	Cynthia Finocchiaro	ext. 101	cynthia@redeemermclean.org
Organist	Joy Mentzel		joymentzel@gmail.com
Pianist	Kathy Detwiler		
Youth & Communications Coordinator	Grace Howie	ext. 105	grace@redeemermclean.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
David Broderdorf
Lee Cronin
Sara Egeland
Megan Kratz
Gene Morrow
Tyler Posey
And a Youth Representative