



Redeeming Features

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Greetings from the Rev. Kate Ekrem

Newsletter

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Dear Friends,

A clergy friend pointed out recently that people used to get arrested for doing what we do every Sunday. In Roman times, Christian worship was illegal and those found gathering for worship were arrested and sometimes killed. One early Christian is quoted as having explained to his Roman questioners why they did this in defiance of the law. He said "The Eucharist cannot be abandoned... don't you know that a Christian is constituted by the Eucharist and the Eucharist by a Christian?"*

Our strategic planning task group came to much the same conclusion, based on interviews with many of you. Worship is why we come to Redeemer and Redeemer is centered in its worship life, as we gather in community around the altar. Just as those early Christians practiced a new way of living in the world, a way that threatened the established order, we also are nurtured and formed in a way of living that helps us live into our vocation as Christians, to share God's love with everyone, sometimes in opposition to the prevailing cultures of our own time.

Our Strategic Plan encourages us to think about worship. Why do we do it, what does it mean to us? How do we find balance between the "Episcopal" and "contemporary" parts of our core values as expressed on the front cover of the strategic plan? It's clear that worship for us at Redeemer means including all ages, forming us for mission in the world, and involving the leadership of lay people as well as clergy. These themes have come up in discernment with both our worship committee and strategic planning group.

As we've explored how best to live out these values on Sunday morning, our Worship committee has decided not to continue with the quarterly family service. Of course we want to have (and will have) the band, a variety of musical styles, children's sermons, and prayers that we write ourselves, but these can be part of our regular worship and not bracketed off in a special service. Consistency from week to week is important for children (and adults!). It's an exciting and hopeful thing that we can experiment and try new things, but not feel we have to continue if something doesn't feel right for us at this time.

Another new worship service that seems to have really struck a chord is the Epiphany service at Brookhaven. We had our "second annual" service last month, and twenty-five people, some of whom hadn't been able to see each other in some time, gathered together to share the Eucharist and enjoy community. We hope to do it again in the Easter season.

There's an old saying that "praying shapes believing." Although it might seem that what we pray expresses what we believe, it's equally true that how we pray shapes and changes what we believe. Worship forms us, reminding us that we are people of God, bringing us healing, grounding us in our vocation and identity, and empowering us for work as God's reconcilers. Worship re-aligns us with God, week after week. As we unpack and explore the insights and challenges of our Strategic Plan, I look forward to talking more with you about what worship means in our life together.

In Peace-

The Rev. Kate Ekrem, Priest-In-Charge
kate@our-redeemer.net

*I am indebted to the Rev. John Brockman for reminding me of this reference.

Vestry Notes

The 2010 vestry had its last meeting on the snowy night of January 19. There were two key business items - presentation and discussion of the Strategic Plan just completed by the Strategic Planning Task Group (SPTG), and presentation and approval of the final 2011 Budget.

Members of the SPTG were on hand to share their thoughts about the strategic planning process and resulting Plan and to answer questions. (See the Dec. 2010 issue of RF for Peter Lund's article on the Strategic Plan.) Other "guest" attendees included 2011 vestry nominees - it was important for them to be part of the strategic plan conversation as the 2011 vestry retreat in early February will focus primarily on identifying the logical next steps.

The 2011 Budget was passed with a round of applause in appreciation for an incredible job by the Finance Committee in achieving an almost-balanced budget.

Out-going vestry members Randy Bowlby, Rose Bennett and Alex Davis were acknowledged (in absentia) for their contributions to the vestry and parish community during their tenure. For the past few years, vestry has recognized retiring members with a contribution to the organization of their choice. A gift will be made to Episcopal Relief & Development: Haiti for Randy; to the Berkshire Humane Society for Rose; and to Save the Children for Alex.

As a reminder, the vestry meets once a month, on the third Wednesday of every month, at 7:30pm in the church library. Vestry meetings are open to all parishioners. Minutes are posted online under "Documents" on Redeemer's website, and a paper copy is posted on the bulletin board outside the church office.

Connie Parrish
Senior Warden



DAFFODIL DAYS ARE HERE!

Spring is just around the corner, and there's no better reminder than the year's first daffodils! Mary Ayzajian has coordinated Daffodil Days at Redeemer since the mid-80s, raising thousands of dollars for the American Cancer Society, and we're happy to offer these "flowers of hope" again. Choose from: bouquets of ten flowers (\$10), potted bulbs (\$15), bear & a bunch, with a 10-inch Boyds bear (\$25), or make a donation toward the Gifts of Hope or Bears of Hope programs. Orders may be placed with Ginny Neumann or on the sign-up sheet in the church office. Payment is by cash or check and due at the time of your order. Please make checks payable to the American Cancer Society, the sponsor of this fundraiser. Orders will be taken through February 28th and flower pick-up will be in the Handley Library at Redeemer on Tuesday, March 15th from 3:30 - 7:30 p.m. If this time is not possible for you, or if you have any other questions, please contact Ginny at 781-862-3655



Solemn Celebration

Every other year the Level II atrium (part of our Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program) offers a Solemn Celebration of the Eucharist for 2nd and 3rd graders which includes a Service of Reconciliation. The children, and their parents (in a parallel group), study their connection with God through reflection on several parables. They also examine those aspects of their lives which might restrict or cut that connection with God. It is a moving experience for the children who participate and for their parents.

The Solemn Celebration will be held this Lent. Preparation classes will be on Sundays in March during regular Christian Formation time, with a Saturday morning retreat (on April 2) and participation in the 9:30am service on Sunday, April 3.

If you have questions about Solemn Celebration, or about the preparation process, please contact Linda Kukulich in Atrium II.

J2A Plans Change

J2A is so overwhelmed with academic responsibilities and potential jobs and volunteer opportunities for this summer that going on the pilgrimage seemed impossible.

Consequently, we have decided to go on a weekend pilgrimage nearby. We will use the money earned through the rummage and pie sales, pancake suppers, and Amazon to also support mission, and to decorate a room in Church for youth. We are grateful for the support of the congregation and the clergy.

Judy Downes , J2A Leader

Confirmation

The next classes to prepare youth for Confirmation will be in Spring 2012. This decision was made so that Confirmation preparation for youth can take place after a group has finished the J2A segment of the Journey to Adulthood program. While J2A does not fulfill Confirmation preparation needs, it provides a strong foundation for understanding the adult commitment of faith in Confirmation. In addition, by holding the youth preparation classes every other year, a larger group (and thus more fun!) will participate. If you have questions, please contact Sabeth, sabeth@our-redeemer.net.



Help Wanted!!

There are currently many opportunities for ministry at Redeemer.

Property Committee: This is a great opportunity to expand your handyman/woman skills and work with a fun group. Help us keep our building and grounds in good repair.

Safe Church: Care about keeping our children and elders safe from abuse? Help us update our policies and keep track of training.

Altar Guild: The altar guild does some of the most important work in our church behind the scenes, preparing the altar for each week's worship. Be part of our worship life and meet a lovely group of people.

Christian Formation leaders: We are looking for leaders and teachers for every age group as we start to think towards the fall. If you are interested in exploring this possibility, please talk to Sabeth.

Welcome/Newcomers: If you'd like to help welcome new members of our parish, and reach out to those who don't yet know about Redeemer, the Welcome Team is for you!

Communications: Our dedicated communications committee is working to help groups efficiently and effectively communicate with the wider parish through various media. The committee is looking for people who have experience in marketing, communications, writing, editing and/or general internet skills.

One of these might be just right for you. For more information on any of these groups, feel free to speak with Sr. Warden Connie Parrish, Jr., Warden George Murnaghan, or Kate Ekrem.



Redeeming Features seeks new editing team!!

It has been our pleasure to edit Redeeming Features for the past year. Our goal, when we began this cooperative editing project last year, was to change RF from the be all, end all, of parish communication to a community building publication. We decided to shift focus of the publication to those things that the Redeemer community has accomplished together, celebrations of our parish members, and parishioner interviews. This focus, we believe, allows us all an additional opportunity to get to know one another and strengthen our community bonds.

The call to edit RF has been a blessing to us personally, as we were able to spend time nurturing our own friendship over laptops at the dining table, editing pieces and creating the theme for each month's publication. It is time for us to transition this project to another editing team and so this month's issue is the last from us. We hope that the opportunity to edit RF will be as enriching for the next team as it was for us.

Peace—Alice Bennett and Janet Kern



Celebrations and Thanks



Mary Ayzajian collects all the treats for the Grow Clinic party...



Redeemer parishioners made it a party at the Grow Clinic at Boston Medical Center on December 22nd.



In February, we say good-bye with enormous thanks to our Interim Music Director, Joyce Painter-Rice.



Welcome the newly baptized: Kate introduces Jane Conrad to the parish as her family looks on.



Celebrations and Thanks

Dear Redeemer Community—

Thank you so much for the lovely shower, with brunch and special musical offerings, and for the gifts to celebrate Isabella Grace's arrival to our family. We feel very cherished and celebrated, and Isabella LOVES a party!

With grateful hearts,
Sabeth Fitzgibbons and Julien, Esteban
and Isabella Goulet



New Music Director Arrives February 20th

On February 20th, we will welcome our new Music Director, Bernadette Colley.



Bernadette has been a director of church music for over 25 years, and for the past 22 has been at the Pleasant Street Congregational Church in Arlington, which recently closed. In addition to her music directorship, Bernadette is founder and principal of Colley Consulting, a research consultancy specializing in arts education policy design and is currently Adjunct Associate Professor of Music Education at Boston University.

Bernadette brings a distinguished musical background, an incredible breadth of experience, education, and energy to her music director position at Church of Our Redeemer. We can expect to be uplifted by Bernadette's musical gifts, and treated to many musical styles and genres, ranging from Palestrina to Dixieland.

Bernadette lives in Leominster with her son Jesse LeVines, a high school freshman. Her son, George Levines, is a journalism student at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. We look forward to welcoming Bernadette into the Redeemer community.



Getting to Know You: *Karen Schragle*



Karen with her grandson,
Michael

The Schragle family came to Lexington from Vermont in 1955 and joined Church of Our Redeemer. At that time-COOR was located at what is now the building which houses the Greek Church at 17 Meriam Street. I have a strong memory of those days, singing in the choir, carrying the cross and attending Sunday School. Great Festivities greeted our move to 6 Meriam, including planting a time capsule. As young kids we marveled at the prospect of being present when the Capsule was finally unveiled. The new church was light and bright, with room for everyone to all be together at one service. Most Sundays, Mom brought me, along with my sister and brother. We came to expect seeing the Wrights, Bittenbenders, Doran, Coles, Caouettes and so many more families with whom we shared so much.

The Handley's opened the rectory on Mass Ave. on many occasions including the front yard on Patriots Day for the Church Food booth. It was tradition for Redeemer people to congregate very early on that Monday for the re-enactment and early parade. To be in such a large crowd and know so many was one of the seeds of affinity we share with Redeemer people today. Those deep commitments of community are why I love Redeemer.

With more family time and fewer distractions, there were many children participating in services and attending Sunday School in the 50's and 60's. The Rev. Harold Handley presented a beautiful display of hand crafted items for our holiday fund raiser. The event was held in the Great Hall, which was the heart of our social activities. As a teenager, Church friendship held through Sunday into relationships weekdays at school, which really mattered growing up in the 60's.

I went on to Travel School from high school and later attended college at night. Today, I am a hands-on travel professional with over 35 years planning vacations. This year I plan to travel to Europe and South East Asia. Happily, my daughter Kim, son-in-law Shawn, and grandson Michael live nearby in Revere, where we spend a lot of time together. Kim was baptized by Bishop Ben [Arnold] who happened to schedule his visitation on her Sunday. Her strong friendships at Redeemer have continued to thrive into adulthood.

In the last 10 years at Redeemer, I have served both on the Finance and Property Committees. When I was asked to switch from the Finance to the Property Committee five years ago, I gleefully agreed! Property has proven to be a great personal asset volunteer job. I have learned so much over the past five years about managing a property budget, as well as managing the land itself, the church building, and rectory. My resource skills have been greatly strengthened by this calling. We always seem to struggle for committee members, and want the Redeemer community to know that all ages are welcome and we encourage young people who aspire to be home owners to work with us. We encourage volunteers to do as little or as much as they can, but take advantage of working in community with very gifted people.



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Calendar

February	Date	Event Details
Thursday	3	7:00 pm CGS Guild
Saturday	5	9 am Liturgy Team meeting
Sunday	6	8:00 & 9:30 am Worship Adult Formation Topic: Global Politics from a Faith Perspective
Monday	7	7:30 pm Property Committee meeting 7:30 pm Executive Committee meeting
Sunday	13	8:00 & 9:30 am Worship Adult Formation: Seasons of the Church Year—Advent, Christmas & Epiphany 12 noon Altar Guild meeting 2:30 pm Redeemer Service at Carlton Willard 4:00 pm Family Circle 5:30 Family Circle Potluck 7:30 pm El Hogar Information meeting
Tuesday	15	Newsletter deadline!
Wednesday	16	7:30 pm Vestry meeting
Sunday	20	8:00 & 9:30 am Worship No Formation for Children and Youth Adult Formation: Seasons of the Church Year—Lent through Pentecost
Monday	21	Office Closed for Presidents Day 7:30 pm Finance Committee meeting
Wednesday	23	4 pm Wardens meeting
Sunday	27	8:00 & 9:30 am Worship Adult Formation Topic: Unpacking the Strategic Plan— Part I 12:00 noon Wardens meeting
Monday	28	1:30 pm Cook for Bristol Lodge 7:30 pm Mission Committee Meeting



The **deadline** for newsletter submissions is **15th of each month**. Please email all submissions to RF@our-redeemer.net or send to the church office, with “RF” clearly marked.