

RedeemerLife

Redeemer Presbyterian Church

Winter 2021

United in Christ

By Rev. Eric Landry

In my Christmas Eve homily, I lamented the need for social distancing during the pandemic. After a year of fear, anger, violence, confusion, and division, the last thing we need is to be distant from one another. Now, more than ever, we need to see union and reunion. The church has an incredible opportunity to demonstrate that unity to our watching world. Unlike the world around us that finds unity only over smaller and smaller divisions, the church should be a place where men, women, and children from every tribe, tongue, and nation gather together united by their bond in Christ. This vision of glorious unity isn't just a future hope, as John saw it in Revelation 7:9. The apostle Paul celebrates this unity as a present reality in Ephesians 2:19, when he tells the Gentile converts to Christ that they are no longer strangers and aliens but have become "fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God."

Maybe it's hard for you to see this unity Sunday after Sunday. Maybe you're concerned with the voting record among the folks who worship with you. Maybe you don't have the same convictions about educating your children as people you fellowship with in our small groups. Maybe you even see differences of theology expressed in our congregation, and all of this makes you wonder how we can be united.

The gift of our union with one another "in Christ" (one of Paul's favorite expressions, see Ephesians and Colossians) must be preserved by our regular efforts at practicing unity. Our natural inclinations are toward selfishness and tribalism. The world, the flesh, and the devil all tempt us away from the hard work of pursuing unity with those who are different from us but united to us in Christ. We may even be tempted to talk generally about unity with other Christians, but neglect the pursuit of unity with those Christians to whom we particularly belong in the local church.

In this new year, I want to encourage all of us to pursue unity. Let me give you three reasons for doing so.

First, you took a vow. If you are a member of Redeemer, you stood before the congregation and pledged to "support the Church in its worship and work to the best of your ability" and to "submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the Church, and promise to study its purity and peace." These vows are easy to fulfill when everything is going well! It's easy to be unified with people who have the same convictions you do, who share the same kinds of Facebook posts, who appreciate the same authors. But remember what Jesus said in Matthew 5:46, "For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?" The vow isn't for the easy times. Just as with our marriage vows, our vows to one another are for those times when we are tempted to turn away, to pursue life with someone else, to think that we would be better off in a different church. This year, remind yourself of the vows you took and ask God to bless the work that it will take to practice the unity of the church.

Second, you need people unlike you. If you haven't yet seen it, I highly recommend that you watch the documentary

Looking Ahead

Congregational Meeting: Sun, Jan 24

6:00 p.m.

Lenten Service: Wed, Feb 17

7:00 p.m.

Intro to Redeemer Class: Sun, Feb 28

2:30 p.m.

Maundy Thursday Feast: Thurs, Apr 1

6:30 p.m.

Service of Darkness: Fri, Apr 2

7:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday Divine Service: Sun, Apr 4

8:45 & 11:15 a.m.

Events listed are planned as of January 10, 2021



United in Christ

Continued from page 1

The Biggest Little Farm. It is a beautiful story of a small farm outside of Los Angeles that uses biodiversity instead of pesticides to keep bugs and predators at bay. Over the course of the documentary, you see how each plant, tree, animal, and bug are necessary to the flourishing of the farm. The church is similar: churches that are all alike or are built around one common interest are not healthy. Churches that include people from different backgrounds, education levels, income brackets, political viewpoints, and stages of theological development provide a healthy ecosystem for discipleship and outreach.

Third, the world needs a unified church. One of the great apologetic opportunities of our age is to show a culture, which is fragmenting into ever smaller divisions, what real unity looks like. This is what Jesus prays for in John 17:23, "I in them and you in me that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you love me." Our unity in Christ is itself a testimony to the world around us! The church can and should be the place where many different voices rise together in praise to the risen King. The church should be the place where folks who disagree about many important things still share the same communion bread and wine as a testimony of their unity in Christ. What if in an age of tragic and dangerous polarization, the church was the model of what will one day be in the New Heavens and Earth?

So, my encouragement to you—especially after a year when we've had to keep our distance from one another—is to lean in. Find someone different from you. Love them. Serve them. Go arm and arm to the Table of the Lord and commune together. Stand shoulder to shoulder and love the community in which you live and work. When you do so, you'll demonstrate to a watching world what our union in Christ really means. You'll give them a glimpse of heaven here on earth.

Holbrook Organ Series

We are continuing our partnership with Arts on Alexander to bring you the Holbrook Organ series. Here are the dates of the concerts for the coming quarter:

January 22: Sa Ra Park, former organist, Lutheran Church of Mainz-Finthen, Germany.

February 12: Joonho Park, Professor of organ from Seoul, South Korea and former organist, Redeemer Presbyterian Church.

March 12: Julia Brown, Director of Music and Organist, Mayflower Congregational Church, Grand Rapids.

All concerts are free and will be on Fridays at 7:30 p.m.

Missions Update: Drs. Isaac and Anne Hotz, Honduras

We wanted to write and just say how thankful and appreciative we are of all your support, especially recently with the hurricanes! We pray that the Lord blesses you all beyond what you could ask or think (Eph 3:20). Thus far we have received \$5200 (from what our records show) from



Redeemer designated for hurricane relief. We just wanted to update you in that we have been able to mobilize \$2000 so far and hope to mobilize the rest soon that came in recently.

- 1) \$1000 went to Mark Hoff in San Pedro Sula and his relief efforts there in some of the most affected areas in the country.
- 2) \$1000 went to Daniel Tercero who, being a Honduran, has been able to get into some areas where Mark's team hasn't been.
- 3) A few men and I are planning on meeting early January to assess the local needs near the hospital and come to a group consensus on how to best use the remaining funds. There are a few people that had their houses flooded by overflowing rivers locally (including a family that works for us personally that is currently living under a tarp). We are trying to assess how we can best help them in addition to the relief efforts in San Pedro (most affected area).

I wanted to share [the picture above of a new believer] that was sent to me from Daniel Tercero (Senior) just a few days ago. He wrote "one more for Christ" when he sent it after sharing the gospel while delivering food in affected hurricane areas.

Again, we will be in touch. Our hearts are filled with gratitude in seeing the fruit (spiritual and physical) of this work.

In His service, Isaac and Anne and family



Communications Transition

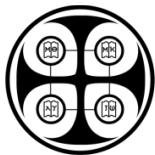
For the past several months, we have been transitioning to a more streamlined means of church communication. Getting used to a new system of communication is always difficult, so we're providing you with a breakdown of the different places to look for Redeemer updates.

Redeemer Life: This is the publication you're holding! This is a quarterly newsletter designed to give updates on what has been happening in the church, an overview of upcoming events, and communications from the pastors. It is not intended to communicate the news updates that you're used to seeing in *Redeemer Times*; rather, it will give a broad picture of Redeemer's life as a church.

News and Notes: This is the email that you receive on Thursdays. This is our primary way of communicating timely news to you. You can get an overview of upcoming events, as well as find links to blog posts to give you a more in-depth look.

Sunday Preview: This email, which goes out on Saturdays, gives you a look at the schedule for the following Sunday, a link to the bulletin, and a preview of the sermon. You will also find a link to that week's prayer requests at the bottom of that email.

Website: Visit redeemerpres.org/blog to get all of our latest updates, or simply go to the homepage and scroll down to the "In the News" section. You can also give through the website (click the "Give" button on the top right), as well as access the church calendar. Members can also find old issues of the Redeemer Times/Life, and access a congregational map.



Slack: Slack is our primary form of informal, online communication between members of the congregation. It will replace the men's and women's email lists (aka the Google Groups). On Slack, you can follow different "channels" to keep updated on discussions that you want to participate in. You can also post prayer requests and service opportunities; look to buy, sell, or give away items; stay up-to-date on our missionaries; and more. Check for an email from Joshua Torrey for instructions on setting up a Slack profile and "opt in" to the channels you choose.



Breeze: Our members-only database site, which includes contact information and photos of our members, serves as our directory. To set up Breeze access, contact Cathy Collier at ccollier@redeemerpres.org.



Small Groups Update

Greetings, Redeemer Members!

Last fall, Redeemer re-instituted and re-imagined our small group ministry in light of COVID-19 and local restrictions. The transition to these "micro-groups" was akin to a choose-your-own-adventure novel! Looking back, this approach proved very successful. The study through Job was pertinent and relevant to many. Several new groups were started, providing additional opportunities for members to study and fellowship together. The growth and feedback we received was overwhelmingly positive. We remain thankful for your patience as we made these adjustments.

As we begin 2021, at the Session's direction, our groups will maintain the ten-person limit on group size. This continues to give us an opportunity to grow the number of our small groups even more, duplicating these "coves of community" throughout the city and region.

Unlike 2020, and as part of a return to "more normal," small groups will again get to choose their own study materials. We hope the diversity of groups, with their different meeting times and locations and study options, will encourage everyone to join (or re-join) a group this year, contributing even more to the success of Redeemer's small group ministry.

We intend to have group details back on the church website as we once did, and you can find some information there already. It will be updated as groups make their decisions about the spring and as new groups—we hope!—continue to form. You can also always email one of us requesting info on groups in your area. 2020 gave us a peek at what this ministry can look like and we are eager to see more members participating in these groups!

Lord willing, and with your participation, we prayerfully hope to see our existing and new groups become the bedrock of an expanding Redeemer small group ministry throughout 2021 and into the future.

—Andrew Waller, Barry McBee, & Joshua Torrey

andrewwaller@gmail.com
barrymcbree56@gmail.com
joshua.torrey@gmail.com



School of Discipleship

New Semester of School of Discipleship

Our Sunday school, called School of Discipleship, resumes with in-person classes for all ages today!

Nursery and classes for children age 2 through 5th grade will be held in Calvin Hall at 10:15 a.m. Youth group studies for middle school and high school youth will be taught by our youth leaders in upstairs classrooms. (We request that all youth in grades 6-12 wear face coverings to class.)

Children's Classes

2 Year Olds: Amy & Andrew Phillips, Room 104

3 Year Olds: Caroline Stanley & Caroline Russell, Room 105

4s & 5s: Ashley Eaton & Sarah Landry, Room 106

1st & 2nd Grades: Joshua & Alaina Torrey, Room 100

3rd & 4th Grades: Brian & Julia Russell, Room 209

5th Grade: Kevin & Stephanie Oldham, Room 210

6th-12th Grades: Taylor Alders, Daniel Eaton, and other youth leaders, Room 212, 206, and others as needed

If you have any questions about classes for children, youth, and college students, please contact Carol Waller at cwaller@redeemerpres.org

In-Person Adult Class

On Sunday mornings at 10:15, our adult class will meet in Covenant Hall for 45 minutes.

Exposition of 2 Timothy, Taught by Elder Bob Phillips

In this poignant, moving, final epistle of the Apostle Paul, we find him shackled and shivering in a dark Roman dungeon, facing imminent execution because of his faithful preaching of the gospel. Yet, his thoughts dwell not on personal or earthly concerns, but on strengthening the faith and resolve of his disciple and co-laborer, Timothy. In an era, just as ours, characterized by theological and moral confusion, even apostasy, Paul summons Timothy, and us, to be strong, brave, and steadfast. As John Stott writes, "Timothy is called to be different. He is not to yield to the pressures of public opinion or conform to

the spirit of his age, but rather to stand firm in the truth and the righteousness of God. In my judgment, nothing is more needed by Christians in today's world and church than this same courage." Do you, like Timothy, need your faith and resolve strengthened in the face of life's relentless pressures and struggles? Would it help to recalibrate your perspective and priorities in your day-to-day walk with Christ? Then this is the book for you: come study 2 Timothy with us!

Note: this a continuation of last spring's class, which was canceled by the shutdown. The class will begin with a review of the previous material to accommodate both new and returning students.

Online Adult Class

You can also access an online class, which is streamed live on Sunday afternoons at 3 p.m. (You can always view it later on the website, YouTube, or our Facebook page.) Watch for the link sent out via Facebook and Slack each week.

The Four-voiced Witness: Reading the Gospel of Our Lord, taught by Andrew Waller

Of all the texts in the New Testament canon, the four Gospels unquestionably stand out. Their recounting of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus are unique in scripture. We respond every Sunday to the reading of the Gospels by declaring, "This is the Gospel of the Lord; praise be to you, O Christ." But what is it about the Gospels that makes them so important? How have Christians read the Gospels in the past? Why do we need four Gospels? This semester we'll be thinking about the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and considering their peculiar witness to the work of God in Christ. We'll learn why these four texts are so necessary to the testimony of scripture and how the Gospels work together in unique ways to bring us the gospel of the Lord.

If you have any questions about classes for adults, please contact Rev. Marcus Serven at mserve@redeemerpres.org



Donations to Heart of Texas Pregnancy Resource Center

Thank you Redeemer Ladies for your generous efforts to meet needs at Heart of Texas Pregnancy Center. Our recent donation of handmade blankets, hats, booties, bibs, mittens, and towel sets and children's books was greatly appreciated and will be put to good use.

If you are looking for a project in the New Year, get out your knitting needles, crochet hooks or sewing machines to make blankets, hats, mittens, booties, bibs, towel sets to donate.

Or if you aren't crafty, please consider picking up some children's books to donate—gently used books are fine.

The Heart of Texas Pregnancy Center serves moms and their babies from newborn to three years old, so a variety of sizes and reading levels of books are much appreciated.

For more info contact Vicki Goodrich 512-517-2171 or vgoodrich53@gmail.com. You are welcome to give Vicki your donations at church, and she will do regular drop offs at the center.



Birth Announcements

Ezekiel Steven Loomis

Praise God for the birth of Rebecca and Steven's fourth child on December 7! Ezekiel is also welcomed by brothers Hosea and Nehemiah, and sister Priscilla Jane.

Christopher Alexander Holt

Meagan and Jacob welcomed their first child on December 31! Christopher weighed 8 lbs, 8 oz, and he and Meagan are doing well.

Please pray for these families, and join them in rejoicing at the births of these new covenant children.

Women's Groups

We have several women's groups meeting this semester:

Journey of Motherhood: Meeting on alternate Thursdays in the Redeemer Library, starting this Thursday, January 14, at 10:00 a.m. to noon. All mothers and grandmothers are welcome. Childcare is provided. Contact: Alaina Torrey, alaina.torrey@gmail.com.

Psalms Prayer Group: Meeting on Tuesday mornings, 7:00-7:30 a.m. and Wednesday evenings, 7:00-7:30 p.m. These meetings take place online via Zoom. All women are welcome to join, and no weekly commitment is required. Contact: Mary Anna Turner, maryannaturner@gmail.com.

Coming Up: Intro to Redeemer Class

Our Intro to Redeemer class takes place three times per year. It is required for membership, but anyone who wants to learn more about Redeemer is welcome to join. The class takes place in two parts. Once you sign up, you will be emailed a link to a video with key information on a variety of topics. Then the second portion of the class will be held in person, as the group gathers on a Sunday afternoon from 2:30-5:00 for a time of discussion and to answer your questions. You are encouraged to contact Pastor Bryce with any questions about this class or Redeemer (bwaller@redeemerpres.org).

Our next in-person class is Sunday, February 28, from 2:30-5:00 p.m.

We plan to meet in a large space to allow for social distancing.

To RSVP, please visit redeemerpres.org/membership.

Redeemer Presbyterian Church

2111 Alexander Ave.
Austin, TX 78722

512.708.1232

redeemerpres.org

Office Hours:
Mon-Thurs: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Service Times:
8:45 & 11:15 a.m.

Session

Dan Allen
Rick Bocock
Scott Brister
Eric Landry
Landy Ligon
Barry McBee
Bret Mercer
Joel Pafford
Bob Phillips
Randy Scott
Joshua Torrey
Bryce Waller

Diaconate

Ben Haguewood
Chris Harbison
David Hendrix
Ken Kieley
Donald Kitchell
Sky Knippa
Micah Koch
David Parker

Deacons' Assistants

Jon Ahrens
Drew Alders
Taylor Alders
Jill Essex
Clayton Knippa
Lee Maverick
Beverly Mercer
Aaron Rhinehart
Robyn Rhinehart
Nate Serven

Staff

Dan Allen, Director of Men's Ministry
Taylor Alders, Assistant Youth Director
Elizabeth Brisola, Counselor
Cathy Collier, Office Manager
George Dupere, Chief Musician
Daniel Eaton, Youth Director
Grace Einkauf, Worship Assistant
Teresa Hendrix, Assistant Kitchen Manager
Elizabeth Knippa, Event Coordinator
Eric Landry, Senior Pastor
Lisal McDonald, Nursery Coordinator
Sarah Ryburn Mealer, Counselor
David Parker, Facility Manager
Michael Phillips, Organist
Christina Raveney, Communications Assistant
Christine Scott, Publications Assistant
Marcus Serven, Pastor of Christian Discipleship
Bryce Waller, Associate Pastor
Carol Waller, Director of Christian Education
Ben Walton, Director of Small Groups