

REDEEMER  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

# Enjoying God and Loving Neighbors

A SHORT HISTORY OF REDEEMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

REDEEMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH EXISTS IN THE POWER OF CHRIST'S GOSPEL,  
AS A COMMUNITY OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM FOR THE SPREAD OF CHRIST'S GLORY.



Welcome! "Introduction to Redeemer" classes started over 25 years ago when Redeemer Presbyterian Church first began. Christians, along with seekers and skeptics, were visiting the new church and were pointed to Christ alone as their only hope. They had questions, and perhaps you do, too. Let this short history of Redeemer answer some of them and inspire more. We hope you will join us as we try to fulfill the original mission "to serve in the power of Christ's gospel as a community of Christ's kingdom for the spread of Christ's glory."

### Prayerful Planning

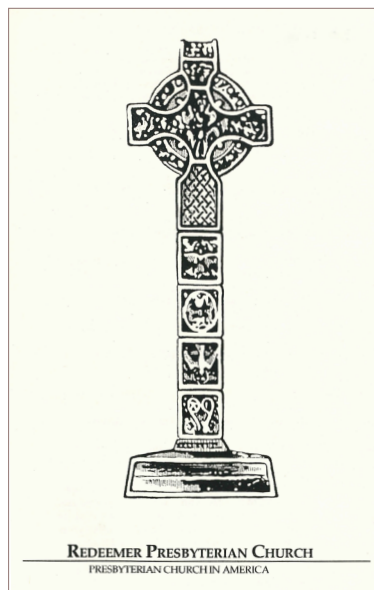
In September 1992, five Austin families started meeting for Bible study, prayer, and discussion about starting a new church. The different families each had different visions, but after months of meeting and praying, the group agreed. They asked God to bring about a church with strong Reformed preaching, God-centered liturgical worship, and a family focus. It would be located in central Austin to be accessible to students and members of Austin's academic, arts, and political communities. With support from the Presbyterian Church in America and Park Cities Presbyterian Church in Dallas, a pastor search committee formed in late 1993. Prayer meetings began to occur every Sunday afternoon.



By May 1994, Rev. Paul Hahn, then serving as campus minister at Auburn University in the PCA campus ministry called Reformed University Fellowship (RUF), was called as church planter. In October, 192 men, women, and children met for Redeemer Presbyterian Church's first official worship service in the ballroom of The Texas Federation of Women's Clubs just west of the University of Texas campus. This was more than anyone had asked or imagined. In fact, one early advisor had cautioned, "It might work if you're comfortable with 100 members over maybe two years..." Twice that many came the first Sunday, and in two years Redeemer had already "particularized" as a recognized PCA church!



On October 20, 1996, Redeemer's first ruling elders and deacons kneel during the laying on of hands and prayer as Redeemer officially became a church.



This Order of Worship from Redeemer's first service on October 2, 1994, shows "Holy, Holy, Holy" was the opening hymn, and passages from Habakkuk 2, Psalms 99 and 103, and Luke 13 were read or recited. Rev. Paul Hahn preached "The Reality of Judgment and the Need for Repentance."





## Purpose

### Honoring God in Worship

Worship on Sunday was at the heart of what Redeemer was called to be and do as a church. Knowing and enjoying God through “The Divine Service” was the great goal and pleasure. The Old Testament, the Psalms, the Gospels, and the Epistles were read, sung, and preached every week. Linking with believers who had gone before, creeds from the apostolic age as well as confessions forged in the Reformation era were used to affirm the Christian faith. Later, the Lord’s Supper was celebrated every Sunday (with homemade bread and good wine!). Music was selected to inspire worshipers and encourage robust congregational singing. Hymns and songs were chosen from the entire 2,000-year history of the Church.



Communion helpers start at an early age! Many have served for years!

LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY,  
TEACHING AND ADMONISHING ONE ANOTHER IN  
ALL WISDOM, SINGING PSALMS AND HYMNS AND  
SPIRITUAL SONGS, WITH THANKFULNESS IN YOUR  
HEARTS TO GOD.

—COLOSSIANS 3:16



We love kids! Training up the next generation of Christians has always been at the heart of Redeemer’s mission.





Each year in worship and feasting the church would remember the significant events in the life of Christ. The first Lessons and Carols service was held on Christmas Day 1994 as part of the regular worship service. Feasts were added, too, and table after table of potluck dishes in the TFWC ballroom marked “Dinner in the Ballroom.”



Everybody loves Redeemer's feasts!

### Outreach to All of Austin

But Redeemer was not founded to meet the needs of her members only. Her early vision statement read, “Redeemer exists to bring the resources of the historic Christian faith to bear on Austin in the hope that visible changes will occur in the quality of its life—spiritually, socially, materially.” Redeemer longed to be a church for all of Austin and to impact her culture by bringing God's truth to the city's university, political, and arts communities, as well as to her neighborhoods and businesses and to those on the margins of society. Proverbs 11:10, “When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices” inspired outreach efforts.

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“WHAT KIND OF CHURCH WOULD REDEEMER HAVE TO BE TO CAUSE THE ENTIRE CITY OF AUSTIN TO REJOICE THAT REDEEMER WAS IN HER MIDST?”

—A VISION FOR REDEEMER, 1996

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Soon after starting, the church called Bill Boyd to start an RUF ministry on the UT campus. By the time Redeemer particularized, close to 100 undergraduates were meeting every Tuesday night in UT's Calhoun Hall just past the Littlefield Fountain. Later, Derick McDonald was called as UT's first RUF-International minister.

Sunday school soon began with classes like “News Hook Evangelism,” in which members were trained to “non-obnoxiously propel conversation about daily news events toward a focus on what is eternally important.” Volunteering began at mercy ministries like Austin Crisis Pregnancy Center (now called “The Source”) and a 40-inmate prison Bible study.

Church planting was another strategy for reaching all of Austin. Soon after particularizing, Redeemer began two church plants. From this effort, Christ the King Presbyterian Church began in 2000 under church planter Rev. John Ratliff, one of Redeemer's founders. By 2003, All Saints Presbyterian Church had begun with Rev. Bill Boyd serving as church planter. All Saints has gone on to plant Grace + Peace Austin. In 2013, Rev. Greg Ward was installed as an Associate Pastor with the intent to establish another church plant in Cedar Park. Four years after meeting as a separate site of Redeemer, the church particularized as Emmanuel Presbyterian Church in January 2017. Starting with the prayer of a few families and over the course of 25 years of ministry, by God's grace five new churches have begun in order to serve the greater Austin area.





### People

Many people have been involved in the life and ministry of Redeemer over the years. The core people who met for prayer in 1992 and who engaged with PCA representatives early on were Landy and Robin Ligon, John and Niki Ratliff, Marvin and Susan Olasky, Chris Acton, and Burl and Terri McClendon. While the Ligans remain at Redeemer, the other founding families now attend daughter churches. Rev. Paul Hahn, his wife Fran and their children arrived in July 1994. Within a year of starting, Rich Lusk arrived to assist Rev. Hahn in serving youth and families. Rev. Greg Grooms, minister at Hill House, a Christian study center located in UT's west campus area, started the choir in 1995. In June of that year, 89 people became Redeemer's first members.



Redeemer's founding pastor Rev. Paul Hahn and his wife Fran in front of their home and, below, with their children.



Dr. Leonard Payton arrived in early 1996 and was responsible for "worship, music, and outreach," including leading the choir. A number of the hymns he composed are still sung at Redeemer today, including "That Stone Is Made Head Cornerstone."

**That Stone Is Made Head Cornerstone**

Psalm 118:22-29 Leonard R. Payton, 1998

1. That stone is made head cor - ner - stone which the build - ers did de - spise.  
2. O bless - ed be the one who comes, comes in Je - ho - vah's name;  
3. Thou art my God; I'll give thee thanks. My God, I'll wor - ship thee.

This is the do - ing of the Lord, and u -  
the O bless - ing from the Lord, for he - vah's is good; his *Fine*

won - drous in our eyes, and won - drous in our eyes.  
pon you we pro - claim, u - pon you we pro - claim.  
grace will end - less be, his grace will end - less be.

This is the day the Lord has made; let us be glad and sing.  
The Lord is God, and he to us has made the light a - rise;  
*D.C. al Fine*

Ho - san - na, Lord, O give suc - cess! O Lord, sal - va - tion bring!  
O bind ye to the al - tar's horns with cords the sac - ri - fice.



Rev. Dr. George Dupere

Rev. Dr. George Dupere joined the Redeemer staff in 2001 as Chief Musician when Dr. Payton decided to pursue seminary studies. Dr. Dupere brought a new level of excellence to the choir's training and repertoire, and he introduced children's choirs to train the next generation of worshipers. The Redeemer Hymnal along with recordings of hymns were produced to support family worship. In addition, Redeemer's Festival of Music, featuring performances of classics like Bach's Christmas Oratorio, Handel's Messiah and Mendelssohn's Elijah began to fulfill part of the original vision to use the arts to bless the city of Austin.





In June 2003, Rev. Paul Hahn was called to plant a church in Knoxville, Tenn. Rev. Danny Shuffield, who had joined Redeemer as Associate Pastor in 1999, faithfully led the church during the two-year search that culminated in the arrival of Rev. David P. Cassidy in June 2005. With the church's recent purchase of an 11-acre tract on Alexander Avenue in central east Austin, Rev. Cassidy led the effort to plan and build Redeemer's first buildings while furthering the original mission of Redeemer.



Rev. David Cassidy



Rev. David Cassidy with Toni and their children Sean, Clair, and Anna.

In 2006, Jack Smith joined Redeemer as Director of Education. When Rev. Cassidy departed to serve as pastor of a church in Tennessee in 2014, and after Rev. Shuffield began pursuing a private counseling practice the next year, the now-ordained Rev. Jack Smith stepped in to lead Redeemer during the search for her third Senior Pastor.



Rev. Jack Smith



Rev. Danny Shuffield





In June 2016, Redeemer welcomed Rev. Eric Landry as Senior Pastor. A church planter from California, God has used Rev. Landry's focus on Christ-centered preaching, shepherding, small groups, and youth ministry to solidify Redeemer and ready it for future outreach. Associate Pastor Rev. Bryce Waller, another church planter (and former Redeemer Seminary staff member) joined Redeemer in October 2017. He and Rev. Dr. Marcus Serven, who joined the staff in 2019 after more than 30 years of service in pastoral ministry, currently assist Rev. Landry on the pastoral staff.



Rev. Eric Landry



Rev. Landry teaching on worship at a family fellowship morning.



Rev. Marcus Serven with Cheryl, Andrew, Joel, and Lydia



Rev. Eric Landry with Sarah and their children Drew and Allie in 2016.



Rev. Bryce Waller with Lisa, Liam, Ryan, and Emma





## Place

### The Early Days: The Ballroom and Concordia

One of the biggest challenges for new church plants is finding adequate meeting space for public worship. Because Redeemer wanted to be a church for all of Austin, it was important to the early families involved to find a meeting space close to the center of the city and the places where they hoped to spread the gospel. In her early years, the Lord provided richly! From 1994 to 2001, and then again from 2008 to 2010, Redeemer met in The Texas Federation of Women's Clubs, located at 2312 San Gabriel Street, just west of the University of Texas campus. Hundreds of worship services were held in the large, beautiful ballroom, as were Redeemer's early feasts.



Set-up and take-down was laborious, but members big and small pitched in! The piano, books, tables, lamps, equipment and beautiful worship materials were all tightly squeezed by geometric miracle into a small closet. Some weeks, the set-up crew arrived to find the building completely redecorated for the latest movie being shot in the historic building.



School of Discipleship classes were held in every nook and cranny of the TFWC building, and the one shown above is huge in comparison to others! The 2nd and 3rd graders met in the storage closet on the left side behind the ballroom stage, while youth met in the closet on the right side. Adults met in The Blue Parlor, the Art Gallery, and on a landing at the top of the stairs.

Parking was tricky, and noise from surrounding businesses could be intrusive, especially during soccer season when Cuatros restaurant across the street blasted World Cup games from their huge outdoor television! Robust singing helped drown out that and other distractions. As it turns out, the owner of Cuatros lived with Bryce Waller just a few doors down from where Redeemer began!

From late 2001 to 2008, Redeemer met in the gymnasium and then in the chapel on the campus of Concordia University at 3400 North I-35. With even less storage space than Redeemer had at TFWC, the set-up crew called the mobile units "church-in-a-box"!



The nursery began in a closet-sized space staffed by two volunteers, each serving one-month shifts. Families kept coming, and the nursery had to move to...the kitchen!

### A Permanent Home

Throughout the early years of the church, members continued to pray about and search for a permanent home for Redeemer. As the church celebrated its 10-year anniversary in 2004, the Lord surprisingly intervened. Jack Roth, the owner of an 11-acre tract very close to where the new Mueller neighborhood would be developed, was approached by land speculators. He did not want to sell. When Redeemer contacted him, he changed his mind! Roth was impressed with the church's desire to build its home on the site and agreed to sell.





For some longtime Austinites, locating Redeemer east of I-35 seemed like a risky move. There was much discussion! In the end, the Lord confirmed that the purchase was good and right in the minds of Redeemer members, and they overwhelmingly approved the purchase. On March 28, 2010, the congregation dedicated Calvin and Covenant Halls—two buildings constructed for worship and Christian education—in a service of worship. Rev. Dr. Joseph “Skip” Ryan, who had pastored Park Cities Presbyterian, the church that supported Redeemer during its planting, gave the evening sermon. The choir sang Psalm 122:1-2, “I was glad when they said unto me, let us go to the house of the Lord...”



The celebration around the land purchase for Redeemer’s permanent home included a church-shaped cake baked by Paula Lundggard, now serving with her husband Chris with MTW in Slovakia.



“MAY HERE, THIS YOUR CITY, BE BLESSED AS YOUR GOSPEL IS BOLDLY PROCLAIMED, YOUR MERCY DILIGENTLY DONE, AND YOUR KINGDOM BUILT UP. WE DO DEDICATE THIS LAND, THESE BUILDINGS, AND OURSELVES AND OUR DESCENDANTS TO YOU AND YOUR PURPOSES.”

—PRAYER AT GROUNDBREAKING



In another surprise, the Lord again provided more than we could ask or imagine when Harvard University sought a home for its large C.B. Fisk Opus 46 organ, as well as the smaller, fine Holbrook organ. A magnificent instrument constructed by the finest organ builder in North America, Opus 46 is in storage awaiting installation in our hoped-for sanctuary. The historic Holbrook organ was installed in Covenant Hall. It packs quite a punch for its size!

Currently the session is in the midst of an ongoing discussion about the possibility of constructing a third building on the site—an aesthetically beautiful, substantial, historic new sanctuary that befits the beauty, the depth, and the enduring power of the gospel. The existing buildings and the sanctuary to come were conceived around the theological convictions, liturgical practices, and mission-mindedness of Redeemer. They are to provide places for “the gathering and perfecting of the saints” right in the heart of the new center of Austin. Though it was hard to imagine at the time, the idea—now almost realized—was that hundreds of people would be walking or driving by 2111 Alexander Avenue in just a few years. It would be a ready field for evangelism and ministry.

## Pioneering Ministries

### In the City

Redeemer’s early leaders were gifted at pioneering ministries. In 1996, Community New Start began as a ministry to the poor, including an after-school program for children in the St. Johns neighborhood. It has since become an independent ministry called Side by Side Kids and is the only free, faith-based program in East Austin schools. About 300 children are now being served.



ARTS ON  
*Alexander*

**Some of Redeemer’s ministry partners in Austin**

City School was another Redeemer pioneer effort. Founded in 2002 by a group of Redeemer families who shared a vision for a school that would be “economically diverse and self-consciously Biblical,” City School’s student body is representative of Austin, with students coming from more than 20 zip codes. Many Redeemer families, as well as Redeemer as a church, are City School supporters, as well as students, teachers, and administrators.

Another effort in keeping with the pioneering and equipping spirit of the church was the housing of a campus of Redeemer Seminary, which began offering theological education classes at the church in 2012. Redeemer Seminary was originally started in 1999 in Dallas as a branch of Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia and expanded to Austin, Houston, and San Antonio before closing in 2014. Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS) facilitated the completion of the seminary students’ training. More recently, Redeemer has initiated its own internship program and begun to develop plans to partner with the PCA’s NXTGEN program to mentor a cohort of students who are attending seminary remotely.





Redeemer's latest pioneering ministry is Arts on Alexander, formed to support the growing number of local musicians and music organizations who enjoy performing in Redeemer's Covenant Hall. Future plans include starting a community children's chorus.

Please see Redeemer's website for a listing of other ministries with which Redeemer currently partners.

### In the World

Integral to Redeemer's founding purpose was the desire to be part of the gospel's spread not only in Austin, but around the world. From its earliest days, Redeemer has supported and sent out missionaries to several parts of the world to serve in a number of capacities from church planting to medical missions.

Currently, Redeemer is honored to partner with Wes Baker and Peru Mission, Isaac and Ann Hotz serving as medical missionaries in Honduras, Kris and Paula Lundgaard serving with Mission to the World (PCA) in Slovakia, and Mike and Debbie Matlock in Asia Minor, as well as Texas A&M RUF minister William Bundurant, UT-Austin RUF minister John Trapp and UT-Austin RUF-International minister Terry Dykstra.

### Conclusion

After over 25 years of ministry, the members and leaders of Redeemer desire to continue to be used by God to further the purposes of his kingdom around the world. As he continues to expand our reach and add to our numbers, our prayer is that he would enable us to steward our resources for the good of his people and the glory of his name.



**Wes and Jamie Baker**



**Kris and Paula Lundgaard**

**Mike and Debbie Matlock**



**William Bundurant**



**John Trapp**



**Terry Dykstra**

**Isaac and Ann Hotz**

