



Redeemer Lutheran Church

# Crossroads

January 2023

## Join Us for “Star of Wonder” on January 6

### A 525 Players Production

Our celebration of Epiphany Day will be special this year. Usually Epiphany Day passes by largely unnoticed. We tend to combine Epiphany with our Christmas celebration, but this year, the actual day of Epiphany comes on a Sunday. Even more, that Sunday evening, January 6, an original short play “Star of Wonder” will be presented here at Redeemer. This play was written by Randall David Cook, son of Charles and Jean Cook, to be performed here at Redeemer. It’s not often you get to attend a world premier from a New York playwright, but that will happen here on January 6 at 7:00pm.



The story centers around Eleanor, who is tasked with producing her church’s children’s Christmas program. The story takes the audience on a theatrical adventure of mayhem and madness even as the audience gets into the act, too. The audience, you see, is the chorus for Eleanor’s version of this Christmas pageant. Expect some good-natured audience participation in this delightful and different Christmas pageant. But above everything else, expect a feel-good, warm, and tender story of the magic of Christmas and how the true spirit of Christmas shines through the mess of our shared human condition.

The word ‘epiphany’ means ‘to make manifest,’ as Christ is made manifest as God’s son among us. Come join us as this gift of talent is made manifest among us, and our celebration of Christmas moves into the whole year.

## The 2023 Choral Scholars’ Annual Gala



Come enjoy an evening of swinging music from the golden age of the Roaring Twenties.

Revel in the music of George Gershwin, Duke Ellington, Fats Waller, and other Roaring Twenty’s favorites as our choral scholars take you back to the swinging times of the twenties.

Enjoy some of the most delicious desserts and confections inspired by the spirit of the Twenties! (the 2020’s and well as the 1020’s)!

Feel free to wear an outfit that looks like the twenties and add to the atmosphere of the evening.

It all takes place on Saturday, February 11<sup>th</sup> starting at 7 p.m. in the Fellowship Center.

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The hymn “Softly and Tenderly, Jesus Is Calling” has a haunting refrain: “Come home. Come home. You who are weary, come home....” Perhaps the refrain for our current time.

About a week before Thanksgiving this year, on Monday evening, Chance and Angel broke out of our fence. They’ve been doing that a lot lately, and in case you don’t remember, Chance and Angel are our two dogs. Chance is a male, younger and stronger, and Angel is a smaller, much more timid female. While our fence is in good shape, some of the boards are getting old, and we think that a deer or some other animal wanders by in the night and our dogs do what dogs do, and before they realize it, they have broken or chewed through and are out and about.

Many times when this happens, they come back into our yard through the same hole they used to get out. But back just before Thanksgiving, they got out and didn’t come back. I didn’t repair the fence right away to give them a chance to come back. When Nan left for work, they were still gone.

A little after lunchtime, I got a call from someone who had Chance, and I went and got him. Which meant I had to fix the fence. In the days that followed, we scoured the neighborhood and the one behind us (where Chance was) looking for Angel, to no avail. We were heartbroken. Nan was hoping and praying someone was taking care of her; I was sure they weren’t since our number was on her tag and no one had called.

Like the father of the prodigal son, we were actively looking for our wayward ‘child,’ calling and pining after her. We couldn’t understand how timid Angel left Chance’s side. That had never happened before. I know it might be hard to believe, but Chance seemed to miss Angel too and know that it wasn’t right she wasn’t home.



Then came Thursday night before Thanksgiving. That evening, Chance sat on our deck and barked into the night sky. We didn’t understand that either. There were no critters he could be barking at, and nothing that should have had him upset. We went to bed.

The next morning, I left for work, and when Nan checked on Chance, there were two dogs in the yard. Angel was back! She had chewed and broken her way back in the same way they typically break out. We were overjoyed. Everything was right once again.

That night, Nan said to me, “I think Chance was barking for her to call to her and to help guide her home.” Maybe so. And maybe in much the same way, Jesus calls to us.

For the past several years, we have endured the pandemic, and at least at this point, things seem to have eased somewhat. In the midst of it all, we have been very blessed to be able to live-stream our worship services so that we could participate in worship safely, and those who live far away have also been able to worship with us too. It’s been a blessing.

But I also wonder a bit too. In this new year, is Jesus calling us home? Is now the time to resolve to return to worship: to join in the fellowship of our church family gathered together in worship and praise of God? Is now the time for many of us to return to in person worship? Is it time to ‘Come home?’

Not long ago I saw a comment about online worship that I thought had some merit. It said, “Viewing worship online is a bit like looking at a fireplace online. You see the fire, but there’s no warmth.”

While viewing is better than nothing, I worry we simply view. Perhaps we watch to see what we can get, when worship is really about giving and praise.

So perhaps now is the time. You’re invited.

“Come home. Come home. You who are weary, come home....”



Saylor Russell	1/1
Veronica Imel	1/3
Eli Huffman Jr.	1/4
Margaret Larson	1/4
Gavin Small	1/5
Luc Vander Voort	1/5
Tia Vander Voort	1/5
Barbara Parker	1/8
H. Paul Addy	1/10
Mary Lou Campbell	1/10
Elizabeth McKeown	1/10
Harrison Schultz	1/10
Holly May	1/11
Lewis Austin	1/12
Deborah Turner	1/12



Rachel Epting	1/13
Todd Knight	1/14
Kennedy Libet	1/15
Amy Gfell	1/16
Savannah Martin	1/17
William Beasley	1/19
Brian Crooks	1/19
David Abel	1/20
Marie Baughman	1/20

Dorothy Harbaugh	1/20
Bob Brunson	1/21
Carolyn Splittgerber	1/21
Palmer Krantz	1/22
Emily Anderson	1/23
Barrett Burgess	1/23
Kai Jorgensen	1/23
Elizabeth Olsen	1/24
McKenzie Dowd	1/25
Lauren Willingham	1/26
Deliliah Beasley	1/27
Joshua Martin	1/27
Judy Stuck	1/27
Sharon Vander Voort	1/28

### Chalking the Door

Maybe you've noticed it the past few years, or maybe you've come in the front doors of the church and



never seen it. For the past several years, we have been "Chalking the Door" on Epiphany Day, January 6.

Chalking the Door is an old tradition intended to serve as a blessing for a home or building.

Above the doors into our narthex, we will write 20+C+M+B+23. That's the year (first two numbers on one end and the other two on the far end), followed by the first letters of the traditional names of the wise men: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. Those letters also abbreviate the Latin phrase, *Christus ansionem benedicat*: "May Christ bless the house."

Maybe you'd like to do this on the lintel of your door as well.

### In Appreciation

Each month the Church Council recognizes and thanks those among us who have offered themselves to the work of the church in special ways. This month the council appreciated:

**Kathy Chartier, Jim Epting, and Preston Smith** who served with distinction and completed their terms on Church Council,



All the musicians, decorators, youth who helped decorate the tree, and altar guild for their leadership and work to beautify the Advent and Christmas season,

And to **Greg Cross and Preston Smith** who removed the dishwasher from the sacristy and replaced it with a needed, small refrigerator.



What a wonderful church family! Thank you so much for all the cards, gifts, and many ways you expressed your love and kindness to us over Christmas. Your support, your care, your prayers mean so much to us. As we move into the new year together, we pray that God will continue to bless our church family and lead us in ministry and mission.

Pastor Gary and Nan



Thank you all so much for your generous Christmas gift. Your gift will enable us to make a trip to visit our children in New York, Tulsa, and Colorado. It is a joy and a treasure to be a part of the Redeemer family. Janet and I are blessed to be a part of this wonderful community. Your generosity with your resources, your time, and most especially, your love is truly overwhelming! We look forward to a great year in 2023, and all the good things to come. Thank you all again!

Jim

I can not believe it has been a year already that I have been here. Thank you so much all for your support and help this past year, it has been greatly appreciated. This is a great place to work.

A Blessed Christmas to everyone.

Yvonne Krouse

Dear Friends,

Thank you very much for the generous gift you gave me this year. I really appreciate your thoughtfulness. You all are so special and have become part of my family.

Love and Blessings to all.

Betty

Dear Redeemer Family,

Thank you for all the ways you support and encourage your church staff and pastors. This family of faith is an incredible blessing to me and my family. Since the tragic loss of Kevin's brother, we have felt your prayers, care, and love in a multitude of ways. Thank you for loving all of us so well. In addition, we are so appreciative of your generous Christmas gifts. Thank you! We look forward to the continued community and ministry of 2023.

May God bless you and hold you close,

Pastor Amanda Burke

"PAB"

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## You Don't Want to Miss It!

Join us as artistic director par excellence, Eleanor, is confronted with some vexing problems in producing the church's annual Christmas Pageant. As Eleanor struggles with a host of setbacks, she comes to learn that she may be part of the problem. This post-Christmas play will make you ponder what's truly important about Christmas.

**STAR OF WONDER, STAR OF NIGHT**

An original play by Randall David Cook

January 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm





Our Christmas Eve service was just beautiful! The gorgeous Chrismon Tree, the bank of poinsettias, the candle-lighting, and the beautiful white paraments. **So, a BIG thank you to some unsung heroes: our Altar Guild.** These tireless dynamos keep all these things going in a way that seems effortless. It's NOT! So, to all those dedicated Altar Guild works a big **THANK YOU!** Your work is valued greatly and appreciated, even if we sometimes don't do a great job saying thank you! And a very special thank you to Juanita Wilson for the floral arrangement on

the high altar. As always, it was stunning! Thank you, Juanita!

And to the host of musicians whose dedication and talent made the Christmas Eve Service beautiful to hear a big **THANK YOU!**

Our wonderful, talented, and hard-working **Adult Choir**—Thank you! We are blessed every week by your singing.

Our amazing and thrilling **Handbell Choir**—Thank you! Your playing deepens and enlivens our worship.

And our solo instrumentalists: Bailey Walker, trumpet; Jason Roddey, Saxophone, Siri Burke Cello, Dylan Coffman, Saxophone, and our accompanist/associate, Lois McLeod. You add that special sparkle to our Christmas Eve.



### And now.....INTRODUCING!

### Ask Miss Edith: A new feature of Grace Notes!



Dear Miss Edith,

Welcome to **Grace Notes** and thank you for taking your valuable time to answer petty questions! I'm so happy to be your first question. Recently while visiting Redeemer Lutheran Church, I couldn't help but notice that during the singing of a hymn one of the verses was omitted! They literally didn't sing a verse. As a

good Lutheran, I was taught that each and every verse **MUST** be sung. Please tell me that this is the height of heresy. I await with longsuffering your response.

Perplexed and Pious

Dear P and P,

First of all, kind reader, no question is petty. Only people are petty.

Although verse omission can seem like a true sin of omission, and there can be disconcerting consequences, omitting a verse or two (or more) can be okay and even desirable. Miss Edith will kindly remind the dear reader that there are hymns with 8 or more verses. I dare say, that could cut into the sermon time, and Miss Edith will not entertain such overreaches from the organ bench. If the text's meaning and intent are kept true and logical, verse omissions are perfectly fine. And for some occasions even desirable.

If you have a question for Miss Edith, please write it on the back of your Communication Card, and we will forward these directly to Miss Edith. Seriously, Ask Miss Edith!



## A Note Found in the Blessing Box

Redeemer's Blessing Box continues to bless the community we are in. We regularly hear of conversations that happen by the box. People expressing gratitude as one of our Redeemer folks fills the box. Others telling stories of how the box was there to help them when they needed it. Now they are bringing items to fill it or giving a donation to help with the ministry. In December the youth were filling the box and found a note that was left inside asking for prayers. This simple box of blessings continues to evolve. It is growing in opportunities for people to engage with one another. It is meeting the needs of those that are hungry. It has now become a conduit for people to express their spiritual needs as well. A simple box. God does wonders with things that seem so simple.



## Book Study Returns!

Be on the lookout for Redeemer's Sunday afternoon book study! We'll be back on January 22nd! More info about the next book coming soon.



## Furnishing the Inn

If you've noticed the rooms across from the hand bell room, you will have seen that they are often full of furniture. Over the past couple of years, we have been able to collect up some furniture in excess of what we collect for Williamsburg County, and this extra furniture has been used in cooperation with Lutheran Social Services to help provide housing for both Afghan and Ukrainian refugees.



In December, LSS called saying that they were receiving several refugee families in late December (around Christmas time) and needed furniture. In addition, there were other churches that had some furniture, but they needed it in a central place to aid in getting it distributed. The question: could we be that central place, using the rooms we keep furniture in? Well the answer, of course, is yes.

## How Did We Feel God's Love?

The Redeemer Family has felt God's love in many ways over the last month... in grandchildren, visiting uncles, family, celebrating births and birthdays, and gathering for Thanksgiving. ... in the Redeemer Family, the love, care, understanding, and compassion of others. ... in successful medical procedures, health, healing, and recovery. ... in Redeemer's Growing Through Grief support group, loading the truck for Williamsburg County, and receiving a red card from the congregation with so many signatures and so much love. ... in a full blessing box, in the music of Redeemer's choir, during funerals celebrating life and new life, through helping a person in need, and through youth caroling and decorating the Crismon tree. For all these ways that we feel love, we thank you, God! Amen.





## Telling Stories

We're in the 2nd half of the Christmas season. Yes, you read that right! Christmas doesn't end until January 5th! Then we get to the season of Epiphany. This is one of my favorites. I think a big part of that has to do with the story that surrounds this season. Through the Christmas season, we've heard the story of Mary and Joseph. We're told the story of a long journey and lack of shel-

ter. It continues with a miraculous birth, angels, and shepherds rushing to the scene.

The story surrounding Epiphany tells a different angle of Jesus's earliest years. With Epiphany, we hear about a star guiding people from a far-off land. They come to worship the young king and bring gifts. These people who followed the star are not of the same faith as Mary or Joseph. They don't practice the same customs or have the same expectations of the divine. Yet, they somehow knew there was something special, something world-changing about this boy. The Magi were the first gentiles (non-Jewish) people to worship Jesus.

One of the reasons I love this story is the way it reaches far into the world. It transcends the boundaries of culture, faith, and tribe. Epiphany reaches out to others in an invitational way. Come and see what this baby Jesus is all about.

While there is nothing that can adequately compare to the Star of Bethlehem, this idea of sharing stories has me thinking. How do we share the story of what God is doing in our lives? What do we tell others about how we follow Jesus from day to day? When do we express the Holy Spirit stirring up love and compassion in our hearts?

Lutherans are often stereotyped as being silent and stoic about our faith. However, we're called to share our faith, share our path, and tell others about the Gospel of Jesus. In this new year, I wonder how we can challenge ourselves to have conversations, ask questions, and share the ways our faith impacts our lives. Be on the look out! I have some fun and creative ways for us to share our stories in 2023! #relustory2023



### ANNOUNCING

THE 2023 ANNUAL

CHORAL SCHOLARS GALA



FEBRUARY 11,  
2023 7:00 P.M.

GET READY TO  
SWING AND FROLIC  
20'S STYLE.

ENJOY THE SONGS, DANCES, COSTUMES, AND  
BAND MUSIC OF THE 20'S.

## Growing Through Grief

Redeemer's grief support group, will be meeting again on Wednesday, January 18<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 am in Redeemer's middle conference room. We continue to have conversations, support one another, and read through the book "It's Okay That You're Not Okay" by Megan Devine. January 18<sup>th</sup> we will discuss chapter 6. Anyone and everyone is welcome in this space. Feel free to pass information along to friends and neighbors that may benefit from this type of group. For more information contact Judy Waldrop or Pastor Amanda.





## Council Orients New Members, Elects Officers, and Approves the Next Phase of Lighting Upgrade

The December meeting of the Church Council typically has two significant things that need to happen: Officers for 2023 need to be elected, and the meeting is an opportunity to begin to orient the new members of Council to ongoing issues that they will deal with in the new year.

With the new members present, Council heard reports and then began to make its way through old business. The Council was updated on the Children’s Ministry Task Force and what is happening with the S.A.V.E events in our community that Redeemer is spearheading. All of Council learned that it looks like the HVAC unit we have been waiting months for is anticipated to arrive in January. Pastor Amanda talked about two programs — the Clean Up Crew and Fund It or Fix it that will get underway in the new year.

Carol Valovcin expressed the delight of the Altar Guild that the unused dishwasher in the sacristy has been replaced with a small refrigerator, making the work of the Altar Guild easier.

Steve Summer reviewed the exploration of the digital sign for the new members, and Pastor Gary reminded the Council that we chose to delay this project because we had already asked a lot of the congregation this year and we needed time before we asked again,

Under New Business, the Council designated part of Pas-

tor Gary’s and Pastor Amanda’s salary as housing allowance (this doesn’t change the total, but does help them with taxes). Then the Council chose January 8 as the day for Installation.

Pastor Gary reported that we can now begin another phase of upgrading our lighting to LED fluorescent. This is a program from Dominion Energy that will pay 90% of the cost up to \$6,000 to do this, which also saves us on electric bills. Most of our building has been completed, and Council agreed that the next phase would be our Fellowship Center.

New Officers were also elected:  
 President: Bill Newmyer  
 Vice-President: Steve Summer  
 Secretary: Kai Jorgensen  
 Treasurer: Todd Anderson.

Finally Pastor Gary and Pastor Amanda were excused so the Council could decide the allocation of the staff Christmas gift.



- Ongoing projects reviewed and updated
- Needed HVAC system hoped to arrive in January
- New Refrigerator in the sacristy
- Lighting upgrade in Fellowship Center approved
- Council Officers:  
 President: Bill Newmyer  
 Vice-President: Steve Summer  
 Secretary: Kai Jorgensen  
 Treasurer: Todd Anderson
- Staff gift allocated

## By the Numbers

### November

	November YTD 2022	November YTD 2021	November YTD 2020
Total income	\$ 435,192	\$ 482,669	\$ 517,783
Total expenses	\$ 524,543	\$ 540,157	\$ 486,555
Income less expense	\$ 89,351	\$ (57,488)	\$ 31,228
Balance on mortgage loan		\$ 15,516	\$ 151,487
Unrestricted cash balance	\$ 96,748	\$ 140,264	\$ 180,978
Attendance	94	113	111



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8:45am - Sunday School 8:45am - Sunday School 10am - Worship 11:15am - Worship & 2pm - Private Event @	2 Office Closed 5:30pm - Bedtime Bible 7pm - 525 Rehearsal @	3 10am - Staff Meeting @ 7pm - 525 Rehearsal @	4 7:30am - Choir Practice 7pm - 525 Rehearsal @	5 10am - Thursday Bible 1pm - Cap Crew 6pm - NAMI support 7pm - 525 Rehearsal @ 7pm - Thursday Bible	6 6pm - Private Event @ 7pm - 525 Performance	7
8 8:45am - Faith Launch @ 8:45am - Sunday School 8:45am - Sunday School 9:30am - Choir practice 10am - Worship 11am - Confirmation	9 9am - Gardendale Garden 10am - Staff Meeting @ 2pm - Ruth Circle @ back 4pm - Finance Committee 5:30pm - Bedtime Bible 6:30pm - CMEIF @ Front	10	11 7:30am - Choir Practice 10am - Morning Glory 7:30pm - Choir Practice	12 10am - Thursday Bible 1pm - Cap Crew 7pm - Thursday Bible	13 SCLCY 9th and 10th Retreat @ Camp Kinard 6pm - Private Event @	14
15 SCLCY 9th and 10th 8:45am - Faith Launch @ 8:45am - Sunday School 8:45am - Sunday School 9:30am - Choir practice 10am - Worship	16 10am - Staff Meeting @ 5:30pm - Bedtime Bible	17	18 7:30am - Choir Practice 10am - Morning Glory 10:30am - Growing 7:30pm - Choir Practice	19 10am - Thursday Bible 12pm - Leisure Timers @ 12pm - Leisure Timers @ 1pm - Cap Crew 6pm - NAMI support 7pm - Thursday Bible	20 6pm - Private Event @	21
22 8:45am - Faith Launch @ 8:45am - Sunday School 8:45am - Sunday School 9:30am - Choir practice 10am - Worship 11:30am - Handbell Choir	23 10am - Staff Meeting @ 5:30pm - Bedtime Bible 6pm - S.A.V.E. Gathering	24	25 7:30am - Choir Practice 10am - Morning Glory 7:30pm - Choir Practice	26 10am - Thursday Bible 1pm - Cap Crew 6pm - NAMI support 7pm - Thursday Bible	27 6pm - Private Event @	28
29 8:45am - Faith Launch @ 8:45am - Sunday School 8:45am - Sunday School 9:30am - Choir practice 10am - Worship 11:30am - Handbell Choir 2pm - Book Study @	30 10am - Staff Meeting @ 5:30pm - Bedtime Bible	31	1 7:30am - Choir Practice 10am - Morning Glory 10:30am - Growing 7:30pm - Choir Practice	2 10am - Thursday Bible 6pm - NAMI support 7pm - Thursday Bible	3 6pm - Private Event @	4



### Redeemer Youth Calendar

Always subject to change!

Sundays—Faith Launch 3yo-2nd, 3rd-6th

No Faith Launch Dec 25 and Jan 1

Jan 8—Confirmation, 7th-10th

Jan 8—0-K Youth Group

Jan 8—K-5th Youth Group

Jan 13-15—9th-10th SCLCY Retreat

February—Souper Bowl of Caring

February 5—Confirmation, 7th-10th

February 17-19—11th-12th SCLCY Retreat

March 5—Confirmation 7th-10th

March 17-19—6th-8th SCLCY Retreat

April 1—Easter Egg Hunt

June 26-30—Camp HUGG, 8th-12th grades

July 16-20, 2024—ELCA Youth Gathering

July 16-20, 2024—ELCA Young Adult Gathering

Young Adult Adventure, TBD



**Epiphany Event**  
Littles-K, 11:30-12:30  
K-5th grade, 11:30-1:30

Lunch - Stories - Crafts - Games

