



Reflections

VOLUME 24

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ISSUE 50

Christmas Message from ELCA Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

We are never alone

Precisely in our distress, in our dislocation, the Lord shows up. Emmanuel -- God with us -- makes his home in the very places we find foreign or isolating.

The room was spare and dimly lit. We sat on folding chairs in a circle -- young Honduran women and some of us from the ELCA. We had come to Honduras to observe the work of AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities). This is the ELCA's strategy to help youth who have been forced to flee their home countries because of violence, abuse, extortion by gangs and extreme poverty. *Amparo* is the Spanish word for shelter or refuge.

In this case, AMMPARO partnered with the Lutheran World Federation and the Mennonites to resettle returned migrants -- those who had tried to seek asylum in the United States but had failed or had been denied and deported back to Honduras.

One by one they told us their stories of fear and desperation. Not a one undertook the long and dangerous trek north on a whim. They told us about the abuse they had suffered, about family members who had been killed by gangs, about the inability to make a living because of the extortion by organized crime. They talked about the bitter sadness of leaving home and family, and the uncertainty of the future.

I remember one young woman in particular. She was pregnant when she tried to migrate to the United States. She had the baby somewhere along the way. She was far from home, mostly alone and desperately wanted her mother to be with her. None of this is what she had hoped for when she was growing up. Circumstances beyond her control had forced her into this new and strange existence. She and her baby were now back in Honduras -- but not at home. Home was too dangerous.

Remember last Christmas? Remember all of the preparations, the travel to be with family? Remember the holy beauty of the Christmas Eve liturgy and receiving Christ's grace and forgiveness at his table? The shopping and Christmas caroling? The in-person gatherings? All that has changed. The pandemic hasn't forced us from our homes but into our homes, sheltering in place, isolated. Not together, but physically distanced. Not gathered with family and friends, but forced apart because of the threat of infection. Forced by circumstances beyond our control into this strange existence. Oh, there will be Christmas carols piped into grocery stores and other essential services, but they will be painful reminders of how life used to be.

We are reminded of the experience of the exiles in Babylon: "By the rivers of Babylon -- there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion. On the willows there we hung up our harps. For there our captives asked us for songs, and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion!' How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land" (Psalm 137)?

I told the young Honduran woman about another young woman who was forced to leave home because of a government decree. She, too, was pregnant and made a long and difficult journey. She, too, was far from home and without her mother when the baby came. She had to find shelter wherever she could. This wasn't what she had hoped for when she was growing up. Circumstances beyond her control had forced her into this new existence. That young woman was Mary and the child was Jesus. Precisely in our distress, in our dislocation, the Lord shows up. Emmanuel -- God with us -- makes his home in the very places we find foreign or isolating. The young Honduran woman, and all of us, can find hope because of the birth of Mary's child. There is no God-forsaken place and we are never alone -- not in hospital rooms, or sheltering in place, or Zoom calls or on dangerous roads.

Many of us will not be physically home for Christmas, but we are truly home in Christ.

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OUR CONGREGATION

Ministers - All who gather here in the name of Jesus

Pastor -- Rev. David Shull

Office Manager -- Becky Trover

Custodian -- Marshall Edgington

Organist/Senior Choir Director -

Kathy Rapp

Pianist/Chimes Choir Director -

Karen Kent

Reflections Editor -- Judith Bird

2020 CHURCH COUNCIL

President -- Margie Frazier

Vice President -- Julie Johnson

Finance Officer --

Secretary -- Chad Eberle

Worship -- Julie Larson

Education -- Wendy Stoica

Outreach -- Jon Disbro

Member Support -- Elyce Herring

Property -- Sue Yehling

Stewardship -- Ruth Murray

APPOINTMENTS

Interim Treasurer -- Julie Johnson

Financial Secretary -- Brad Phillips

SPECIAL FUNDS TEAM

Michelle Clemence

Bruce Collins

Dave Engel, Chair

Nancy Magargal

Jim Riley

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Superintendent -- Emily Ott

REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH

1555 S. James Rd.

Columbus 43227

614-237-1263

www.redeemerluth.com



The Redeemer Community

RLC's Final Midweek Advent Service Set for Dec. 16

Redeemer will livestream the Holden Evening Prayer for the final midweek service of this Advent on **Wednesday, December 16** at 7:30 p.m. Just go to Redeemer's Facebook page to view the service.

RLC Sets Virtual Christmas Eve, Christmas Day Services

Redeemer's **Christmas Eve** will have two parts: first, from 7-7:30 p.m., everyone is invited to join a Zoom gathering to see and offer greetings to each other. Through a simple setting on Zoom, the person/family who speaks is enlarged, so we can get a good view of everyone.

Then at 7:30 p.m., the Christmas Eve service will be available to watch on YouTube. This will not be a live-streamed service. It will be a video with lots of participants who have recorded their parts in advance so you will see members of the Redeemer community you haven't seen in quite a while. Included in this will be the world premiere of a new Christmas pageant starring Redeemer families. And you will hear Christmas carols that you can joyfully sing along with at home.

At the end of the taped service, we will return to Zoom. We ask all of you to light a candle on Zoom and darken the room you're in, so we can feel like we're back in the sanctuary together, challenging the dark with our light. A solo voice will then lead us in "Silent Night."

If you would like to do a reading that you would pre-record for the Christmas Eve service, please let Pastor Dave know.

On **Christmas morning** at 10 a.m., we will gather on Zoom for a service of carols, sharing stories of Christmas, and simply enjoying the chance to share this morning with people we love. Because you're at home, you can still be in your pajamas with your favorite beverage and some wonderful Christmas morning edible.

RLC Seeking Readers for Livestreamed Worship Services

Enjoy seeing a variety of people participating in Redeemer's livestreamed Sunday service? Redeemer is seeking to expand the number of individuals willing and comfortable to come to the church to read the lesson. The only other people who would be in the building are the others directly involved in the service. If you could serve in this way, please contact **Pastor Dave**. Thank you.

Dec. 16 Deadline to Assist Two Berwick Families

Sister Act invites Redeemer members to participate in making this Christmas a little merrier for two families at Berwick Alternative K-8 who could use some Christmas cheer. To that end, Sister Act is collecting \$25 gift cards to anywhere (Kroger, Giant Eagle, Walmart, Meijer, Target, Amazon.com) which will be given to the parents so they can shop for their children. **The deadline to submit contributions is this Wednesday, December 16.**

The first family is a large family with nine children. At the beginning of the school year, their father passed away. It has been difficult for mom to now be a single mom. The children are older. The Berwick students are 8th graders. The youngest is a 6th grader.

The second family is one of the school's special needs families. The mother recently got out of the hospital and she is the only working parent. This family also needs basics like gift cards for food and clothes. They have four girls: 2nd grade, 5th grade, 6th grade and 10th grade.

Please bring the gift cards to the church by 6 p.m. on **Wednesday, December 16**. **Pastor Dave** and **Principal Mitchell** will deliver the cards to the families. For those unable to get the gift cards to the church, please contact **Kristi Hildebrand** to make arrangements.

For questions, please contact Kristi at kristi43230@gmail.com or 614-579-6860, **Michele Disbro** or **Kay Ernsthausen**.

Ways to Make Christmas Real for Some Neighbors in Columbus

Pastor Dave reports that he recently heard from **Grant Eckhart**, who leads Jacob's Porch, the ELCA campus ministry at Ohio State University. Grant is inviting congregations to provide Christmas gifts to several refugees in Columbus who are facing unimaginably lonely and terrifying circumstances. The Outreach Team at Redeemer has talked about Grant's request and wishes to share it with you for your consideration and your prayers. The descriptions below are written by Grant.

#1: Two kids fled Honduras earlier this year with their mother after their father was murdered and their lives were in danger. They made it to the U.S. border, seeking asylum, but were immediately turned away and sent to the camps in Mexico near the border. Tragically, they were abused there, and the mother made what must have been a gut-wrenching choice to send the two kids across the border as unaccompanied minors because they had a better chance of getting into the detention facilities on the U.S. side. They were received into the U.S. system, were assigned a caseworker, and spent many months in the U.S. facilities. Sadly, those facilities were not much better, and again they were subjected to some terrible experiences.

Ultimately their caseworker let them leave in the custody of a woman who runs a nonprofit here in Columbus. Since September the children have been living with a caring family and making regular phone calls to their mother in Mexico, who is now seeking asylum there (which is apt to take six-12 months). However, one member of that family got COVID, was hospitalized, and was recently sent home for hospice care. So the family can no longer house and care for these children.

We have now found another family that is willing to take the two kids. They are a family with a big heart but not much money and have already adopted four other children with various disabilities related to fetal alcohol syndrome. So we are inviting you to purchase a gift for any of these four children as well.

*A "Genius" signup has been set up that lists specific items for all the kids: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080d48a4aa22a46-holiday>. But Visa cards, gift cards, and checks would also be welcome. Any of these gifts can be mailed to Jacob's Porch, 45 E. 13th Ave., Columbus, OH 43201, and Grant will make sure the children receive them, along with any letters that might be included. Grant will be delivering everything by **Tuesday, December 22**. Checks should be made out to Jacob's Porch with "Mission outreach/children's fund" in the memo line or mentioned in the letter.*

#2: A man from Ghana fled his homeland seven months ago because he was being persecuted for his sexual identity. He entered the U.S. and was immediately detained by ICE in California. Because of a COVID outbreak at his detention facility, he was allowed to leave with an ankle monitor. He came to Columbus, where his cousin and sister live in an apartment. However, the sister has lost her job, and the cousin makes minimum wage, so the man has asked for money to buy winter clothes, with anything extra going for food or rent. I spoke to the referral hotline in California to vet this situation. The agent there said that the man had been helpful in translating English for other immigrants in ICE detention, and she believes he is sincere. After speaking with him, I believe the same. These situations move fast, and typically all the details are not known immediately. I am hoping to find at least several hundred dollars for him to buy some clothing. If that goes well and we get to know him further, we may seek further assistance.

*The man's asylum case will be called here in Columbus on **December 23**. If you would like to contribute to his needs, please send Visa cards, gift cards, or checks made out to Jacob's Porch with "Mission outreach/Ghana" in the memo line.*

Individual names have been withheld in both of these situations because of the sensitivity of the cases. If you have questions, please contact **Pastor Dave**.

Thank you for any assistance you might feel led to offer.

Mission Endowment Fund Seeks Suggestions for 2020 Distribution

Each year Redeemer contributes the interest from the Mission Endowment Fund (MEF) to other charities on behalf of the congregation. The guidelines for distribution, as established in the constitution; are to establish/support ministries of outreach within or on behalf of the congregation, and to further partnerships in mission through the synodical, regional and national expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Examples, include but are not limited to ELCA Good Gifts, LSS Food Pantry, the sanctuary program at First English Lutheran Church, Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Outdoor Ministries in Ohio and affiliated camps, Redeemer's partnership with Mid-Ohio Food Bank, etc.

To those ends, the Special Funds Team (SFT) is seeking suggestions for the use of the funds for 2020. Please use the form below to nominate possible recipients. You may leave it in the church office or copy/paste it into an email it to Dave Engel at joanie.dave@yahoo.com.

Suggestions are due by **Sunday, December 20**. The SFT will make its recommendation to Council which, in turn, will present the final recommendation to the congregation at the January annual meeting.

Thank you for your suggestions.

Mission Endowment Fund 2020 Distribution Nomination

Organization Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Web Site Address: _____

Organization's Purpose: _____

Amount Requested; _____

Redeemer member(s) involved with the organization: Yes _____ No _____

If yes, who? _____

Redeemer member submitting the request: _____

Please submit to church office or email to **Dave Engel**, joanie.dave@yahoo.com, on/before **Dec. 20, 2020**.

Tuesday Bible Study Continues Dec. 15

The Tuesday Bible Study, which is studying of the book of Genesis, resumes on **Tuesday, December 15**. If you have Tuesday afternoon free, join us. We are a group of people who are both serious about listening for the Spirit's voice in the text and in each other and serious about supporting each other through whatever we're going through -- and who laugh deeply and often. Give us a try! Get in touch with **Dave Shull** if you have any questions.

To join the group this **Tuesday, December 15** from 1-2:30 p.m., go to the Zoom app and then enter the following information: Meeting ID: 871 3736 6983; Passcode: 619946. To participate by phone, call 646-876-9923. If you don't have the Zoom app, you can join the meeting by copying and entering the following web address in your browser:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87137366983?pwd=T0NoUU5ORmNYN1YrajhpZ2hGR09pdz09>

Adult Sunday Education Class Set for on Dec. 20

The Sunday Adult Education class resumes on **Sunday, December 20**. At that time the class, which has been looking at “How do our experiences guide us in faith?” The next class will held on Zoom on **Sunday, December 20** from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Join the Zoom Meeting ID: 820 2910 0882; Passcode: 024855. By phone, call 646-876-9923. If you don't have the Zoom app, you can join the meeting by copying and entering the following web address in your browser:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82029100882?pwd=a0pQaVITTFIsQTlhZllhRUFuncnZoQT09> .

You would bless us by your participation in this!

Previous Sunday Worship Services Available on YouTube

Previous Sunday worship services are available at <https://tinyurl.com/r6mk2xh>. For the current Sunday Worship Bulletin, go to the Redeemer website at www.RedeemerLuth.com >News, Sermons, Devotions.

We are holding one another in prayer and in spirit as we work through this time. Go in peace, serve the Lord, wash your hands!

Important Emails

DShull@RedeemerLuth.com – use for communicating directly with **Pastor Dave**.

Info@RedeemerLuth.com – use for communicating with the office, *Reflections* newsletter, **Office Manager Becky Trover**, healing prayer requests or for general information.

MemberCare@RedeemerLuth.com – use for communicating with the Member Care team about needs for personal ministry such as in-home communion, a home visit, meals, etc.

FinSec@RedeemerLuth.com – use for communicating with **Financial Secretary Brad Phillips**, and for stewardship campaigns.

Itgroup@RedeemerLuth.com – use for communicating with Redeemer's IT Team for items related to the website.

Property@RedeemerLuth.com – use to report items that need repair in the church building.

SundaySchool@RedeemerLuth.com – use to offer suggestions for our Sunday School ministry.

Transportation@redeemerluth.com – use to request temporary transportation assistance.

Communications@redeemerluth.com – use to send church related announcements or pictures for sharing on Redeemer's social media sites. Another way is to tag Redeemer in the posts.

Publishing Deadlines for *Reflections*, Sunday Bulletins

For *Reflections*

- **PLEASE SUBMIT PRIOR TO 5 P.M. ON SUNDAYS.**
- Send to info@RedeemerLuth.com and put *Reflections* in subject line.
- Or leave a note in the *Reflections* mailbox at the top of the stairs outside the church office.

For Sunday Bulletins

The deadline for information to be published in Sunday bulletins is the **Wednesday morning** before. That information can be sent to the above email: just put “Bulletin” in the subject line.

Prayers and Personals

Prayers are asked for **Bonnie Hegreness** who writes that she, too, is suffering from COVID-19: “about a month, have been in isolation in my apartment, fatigue, chills, and body aches. Hope everyone at Redeemer is well.” Prayers are asked for **Skye Andree**, who had a medical procedure and they continue to be asked for **Ken Jones** as he awaits the results of medical tests. Prayers are also asked for **Michelle Clemence's** roommate **Courtney** who has tested positive for COVID-19. Prayers are also asked for **Dora Pinder** and her family who are facing some challenges.

RLC's Advent Booklet Still Available

It's not too late to get a copy of Redeemer's Advent Devotional Booklet by stopping by the church (call first to arrange a time) or calling the church office and asking that one be mailed to you. The daily devotions were written by Redeemer members and offer their perspectives on the Bible texts for the days.

The daily devotion can also be emailed you. Again, just call the church office at 614-237-1263 and ask to be added to that email list.

Sale of Face Masks to Benefit Abuse Victims



Diane Louangrath, a Redeemer member, has founded an organization called Renewed Strength and its partner Renewed Strength Zambia to help women and children who have suffered sexual assault or abuse. After speaking with Redeemer members last year, she traveled to Zambia to help heal the wounds of abuse and give guidance on its prevention.

Diane returned with some cloth, now made into masks which she is selling to help support the mission of her organization in Zambia and in the U.S. (She has applied for nonprofit status and is awaiting the answer.) If you are interested in purchasing a mask (in basically orange or yellow), the cost is \$5; **Kathy Zwanziger** is coordinating the distribution. Thank you.

Christ in Our Home Devotional Booklets

The January – March edition of *Christ in Our Home* devotional will soon be available. If you would like to have a copy, the church office will be happy to mail one to you. Call 614-237-1263 or email info@RedeemerLuth.com

If you prefer, you may receive Christ in Our Home devotionals via email by going to <https://go.augsburgfortress.org/christ-in-our-home-email-subscription>.

December Birthdays

15-Melinda Eakin 19-Darren Baldogo
19-Joe Darst 19-Novella Hinkle
21-Kolya Larson 24-Julie Johnson
25-Doug Eakin 26-Emily Kent
27-Susan Darst 27-Paul Ritter
29-Tom Comstock 31-John Kennedy
31-Emma Martin

+ + +

COVID-19 Information

To get the most up-to-date information regarding the pandemic and Ohio's COVID-19 activities, go to the Ohio Department of Health website at <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/> or call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

In addition, the Southern Ohio Synod has put together a number of Ohio Department of Health (ODH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) resources online at <https://tinyurl.com/y9ohdaov>. Among the items linked to are the latest "Stay Safe Ohio" order from **Gov. Mike DeWine**, a checklist on face coverings and cleaning and disinfecting alternatives.

The Wider Church

ELCA's Good Gifts Program Covers Gamut of Needs

Even though Redeemer will not be offering its own in-person Alternative Gifts Fair this year, that does not mean that mean folks cannot still support the ELCA's Good Gifts program And this year, two new

pandemic-related programs are available to support: soap and sanitation supplies (\$25) and protection for frontline workers (\$25).

The former provides sanitation supplies and education for households, schools, clinics and other public spaces while the latter provides personal protective equipment (PPE) such as face masks, gloves and disinfectant.

This is in addition to the many projects that run the gamut from providing a goat and flock of chicks (\$60) to supporting a community garden (\$200) to providing scholarships (\$100). Chicks alone are \$10.

To see all the options available go to www.ELCA.org/goodgifts, call 1-800-638-3522 or pick up a catalog at the church. (Best call first to make sure someone is there.)

The Community Beyond

Christ United Methodist Seeks Volunteers for Dec. 16

Christ United Methodist Church in Berwyn, which has been serving as a Learning Extension Center for the Columbus Public Schools for a couple months now, is seeking volunteers for a one-time project this **Wednesday, December 16** from 4 to 7 p.m. This project, which supports the effort by the Columbus Public Schools to reach out by phone to all the families it serves, involves making some calls to a few families. The center will train volunteers.

To sign up to help go to <https://forms.gle/GGNKrQMr9TSHJFbC7>. Volunteers will need access to a phone and a computer to make these calls. When you sign up, you'll receive additional information including details about the volunteer training session to ensure you're ready to answer family questions. Thank you!

CVSHealth Hiring Health Care Workers for COVID-19 Vaccine Team

CVSHealth has announced that its hiring 1,000s of pharmacy technicians, pharmacists and nurses to assist in its COVID-19 vaccination efforts. "An addition 'Hero Pay' will be offered to the pharmacy teams administering the vaccinations on top of standard pay." To learn more, go to <https://jobs.cvshealth.com/covid-19-vaccine-support>.

Getting Ready for Sunday

Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 20, 2020

Lessons

Readings: Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26; Luke 1:26-28, 30-32, 46-55

Prayer for the Times

This prayer comes from **Pastor Steve Bond**:

It's not that we're asleep, God,
but that we're not paying attention.
Or rather, with so many other noisy, shiny things
all vying for our eyes and ears,
we pay attention to everything else
because it is comfortable to let them distract us.
Maybe that's why
You keep leading people into the wilderness.
Maybe there's nothing sacred about the sand
or holier about the parched ground,
but there is less background noise,

and fewer talking heads,
that's for sure.
Maybe we can let these days
of somber separation
be the wilderness we need
so that the voices you raise up
can startle us into action, truth, and love
without our trying to change the channel.
Amen.

Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Intercessions & Thanksgiving

+ For the people of Peace Lutheran Church in Gahanna.

+ For Redeemer community member Sarah & Marques, Rosalie, and Malcolm Highland.

Each week we remember in our prayers in worship those who cannot be with us and those with special needs and concerns: Bebe McCoy, Robin Stokes, Lea Spang, Bonnie Hegreness, Heidi Carman, Cora Marquez, Mary Kennedy, Kelly Scott, Diane Louangrath, Sue Baker, Julie Denniss' uncle Ed Stewart, Kevin Bailey's sister Kleta Childs, Kathie and Nancy Ehrich, Stan Heacock, Jeremy Davis, Val Farnham, Bebe McCoy's brother-in-law Walt, Brittany Parsons, Lynn Belhorn's friend MaryAnn, Laura Warren's brother Walter Hudson and his wife Jan, Doretha Holland, Shirley and Jack Miller, Deidre (DJ) Zimmer, Jon Denniss, Mary Bowling's sister Val, Carolyn and Ed Klopfer, Nancy Stinson's brother Tom Starkey, Kathleen Zwanziger's brother Mark Zwanziger, Larry Trover, Earl Bradley's brother Fay Bradley, David Hairston, Kay Ernsthause, Marshall Edgington and his wife, Kristi Hildebrand's grandmother Hazel Plice, Ken Jones, Skye Andree, Michelle Clemence's roommate Courtney, Dora Pinder and family.

Noisy Offering will be for Kaleidoscope Youth Center.

Sunday Faith Exploration Class

Sunday, December 20: Adult Sunday School "How Do Our Experiences
Guide Us in Faith?"
Led by Pastor Dave Shull

This Week at Redeemer

December 15 - 21, 2020

<u>Tuesday</u>	1:00 p.m.	ZOOM Bible Study
<u>Wednesday</u>	11:00 a.m.	ZOOM Coffee and Conversation
	7:30 p.m.	LIVESTREAM Advent Worship
<u>Thursday</u>	7:00 p.m.	ZOOM Congregation Council Meeting
<u>Sunday</u>	10 a.m.	LIVESTREAM Worship with Holy Communion on YouTube
	11:15 a.m.	ZOOM Adult Sunday School