



Reflections

VOLUME 28

January 2, 2024

ISSUE 1

Some Words in Which I Find Some Wisdom

It's the time of year when everyone has their Top Tens of 2023. For the first *Reflections* front page in 2024, I thought I'd share some short pieces of writing that I find wise, and that I could benefit from remembering and living in 2024.

Last year, the Redeemer book group read the novel *A Psalm for the Wild-Built* by **Becky Chambers**. One of the two main characters is a robot named **Moss**. At one point, he admits to his friend, **Dex**, "I wish I could understand experiences I'm incapable of having."

A bumper sticker: Don't believe everything you think. Or another way of putting it: Our brains are designed to keep us alive, not tell us the truth.

Another bumper sticker I saw in Portland, Oregon, which prides itself on staying weird: Normal people make me nervous.

As my brothers and I were going through some of dad's files this past summer to put his memorial service together, we came across this quote in a number of different places. **I.F. Stone** was an investigative journalist whose courage and honesty got a lot of people really angry with him. When he was initiated into *Who's Who*, and was asked to submit a biographical statement, instead of bragging about all the awards and accolades he'd received, he decided to share with people the values he tried to live by:

*To write the truth as I see it,
to defend the weak against the strong,
and to seek, as best I can,
to bring healing perspectives to bear
on the terrible hates and fears of [hu]mankind,
in the hope of someday bringing about one world,
in which [we] will enjoy the differences of the human garden,
instead of killing each other over them.*

Howard Thurman: Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.

Pema Chodron: Fear is a natural reaction to moving closer to the truth.

Tripp Fuller: I don't want to be part of a community where I have to choose between being honest and being loved.

Anne Lamott: You can safely assume you've created God in your own image when it turns out that God hates the same people you do.

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OUR CONGREGATION

Ministers - All who gather here in the name of Jesus

Pastor - Rev. David Shull

Office Manager - Becky Trover

Office Assistant - Diane Brobeck

Custodian - Marshall Edgington

Organist/Senior Choir Director - Kathy Rapp

Pianist/Chime Choir Director - Karen Kent

Reflections Editor - Judith Bird

2024 CHURCH COUNCIL

President - Krista Skipper

Vice President -

Finance Officer - Laura Warren

Secretary - Sue Watson

Worship - Michelle Clemence

Education - Katie Jacobs

Outreach - Diane Brobeck

Member Support - Elyce Herring

Property - April Smith

Stewardship - Kathy Denhard

APPOINTMENTS

Treasurer - Julianne Johnson

MUTUAL MINISTRY TEAM

Margie Farnham Marques Highland

Emlyn Ott Rich Pautsch

SPECIAL FUNDS TEAM

Dave Engel, chair Ashley Bird

Julie Boreman Laura Warren

Wendy Stoica Terry Warren

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Superintendent - Emily Ott

REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH

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The Redeemer Community

Adult Education Resumes Jan. 7 with Assisting Minister Training

On **Sunday, January 7**, there will be a training for assisting ministers during the adult ed time, from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Anyone who wishes to explore being an assisting minister should contact **Pastor Dave** at 206-725-3785 or via email at dshull@redeemerluth.com.

On **Sunday, January 14** after worship, the Council is offering an opportunity for people in the church to ask questions about the proposed 2024 budget, which will be voted on at the congregational meeting after worship on **Sunday, January 28**.

On **Sunday, January 21**, **Emily Kent** will lead the class. As she reports, “I have completed my Death Doula training and am eager to share what I've learned. I'm on a mission to increase conversation and decrease anxiety about the dying process.” In addition, she will be hosting her first “Death Café” at the Gahanna Public Library on **Tuesday, January 9**. For more information, please click this link: <https://tinyurl.com/32bjcmm5>

On **Sunday, January 28**, the congregational meeting and lunch will take place immediately following the worship service.

The Sunday Adult Ed class will resume its regular schedule of weekly offerings in February.

January Book Discussion Coming Up

Sheryl Owens reports that Redeemer's book group will be discussion *This Land Is Our Land: An Immigrant's Manifesto* by **Suketu Mehta** at its meeting on **Wednesday, January 17, 2024** at 7 p.m., both in-person and on Zoom.

She writes, “Mehta's forte is not mincing words or verbal diplomacy. He does not sugar coat his perspective; in fact, he rips off the bandage and throws alcohol on the wound left behind and then douses you with an ice water bath. This is either refreshing, or startlingly shocking, but it is not boring. You immediately feel his frustration and anger.... and hope.

“You may have heard it before, but this is not a whisper. It is a migrant's tale, and a minority tale. It is an economic tale since migrants and immigrants have all been touched by this saga. However, some have been able to rise above it because they could and chose to blend in.

“I was going to include a quote from this book, but choosing just one is like eating one Lays potato chip. Instead, I'll just invite you to read this book, and join the discussion: ... I believe there is something for everyone on this journey.”

To join the group on Zoom, go to

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86581504887?pwd=ZkFSV2tKM2xEd3dyK1RvSURJYlFuZz09>; Meeting ID: 865 8150 4887; Passcode: 274918; Phone only: 1-312-626-6799.

Ministry Evaluation Provides Helpful Insights

Last fall, the Mutual Ministry Team joined Church Council in evaluating Redeemer's ministries and **Pastor Dave's** relationship to those ministries. This “ministry evaluation” replaced the traditional personnel evaluation that Redeemer has used in the past to review the pastor. After consultation with the Southern Ohio Synod, both mutual ministry and council concluded that a more holistic approach to reviewing the pastor would provide a clearer picture of the pastor's participation in the current life of the congregation and the goals for the future. “As a group, we found it healthier – and more helpful – to discuss Redeemer's ministries rather than focus solely on the minister. Simply put, if we only focused on the pastor and the pastor's performance, then we would lose the larger picture within which the pastor functions,” **Margie Farnham**, a member of the Mutual Ministry Team, explains.

“Mutual Ministry team member **Marques Highland** designed the survey used in the process. Marques' professional experience includes work with data-driven tools such as the one he prepared for us. The survey's purpose was to gauge how closely the congregation perceives their priorities and the pastor's to be aligned. We were asked to rank order the criteria based on our perceptions of the level of importance to the congregation and to the pastor. Once council, mutual ministry, and Pastor Dave had completed the survey, Marques tabulated the results and presented them during a joint meeting of council and mutual ministry.

“Overall, the responses suggest the congregation's priorities and Pastor Dave's priorities seem closely aligned. In a few areas, the responses were on the nose! For instance, we found ourselves in near perfect

alignment in our ranking of what we perceive as the congregation's most important values: inclusion, compassion, and justice (with 'inclusion' at the top). In another example, our ranking of 'ministry priorities' was very closely aligned. Those priorities were:

- "Helping everyone feel welcome.
- "Giving opportunities to serve and grow.
- "Activities to make the world more just.
- "Providing concrete ways for people to show love.

"Most respondents ranked in-person events as the most important means of communication, yet we know social media (ranked near the bottom) is how the world communicates today. How might we expand our social media presence? What does that look like? These were just some of the questions and discussion topics that the survey ignited. We also talked about our Lutheran identity, the liturgy, adult education, and the communities we serve.

"Ultimately, the survey gave Pastor Dave a chance to see what ministries council and mutual ministry believe the congregation deems most important. Those rankings will continue to direct conversations with council and provide some guidance as we consider the future of our programs.

"Overall, council, the Mutual Ministry Team, and Pastor Dave found the survey to be a useful tool. If you would like a copy of the survey with results, you can pick one up in the church office."

Margie Farnham, Mutual Ministry Team Member

December Council Meeting

At the December meeting of Church Council on **Monday, December 18**, **Financial Officer Nate Ott** reported that the deficit is less than had been budgeted for 2023. He noted that the deficit the congregation approved in the 2023 budget was nearly \$40k; the deficit Redeemer will end up with is likely to be in the range of \$10-\$20K.

The **2024 Budget** was reviewed and approved. On **January 14** during the Sunday School hour, there will be a Budget Overview for all members of the congregation who wish to attend. **Brad Binau** has accepted the nomination for vice president of the 2024 Church Council, completing the slate. Additionally, it was announced that **Terry Warren** has renewed for another term on the Special Funds Team. Both Brad and Terry will be voted on at the Congregational Annual Meeting taking place on **Sunday, January 28**.

Council briefly reviewed the summary of the 2023 Redeemer Ministry Review prepared by **Pastor Dave** and **Margie Farnham**. Any action will be considered by the 2024 Executive Team and Council. Elsewhere in this issue of *Reflections*, Margie describes that process and some of its findings. Anyone wanting a copy of the questions and results of the review can pick it up in the church office.

Michele Disbro announced that the Special Funds Team had approved the laptop purchased recently, the plaque being ordered for **Larry Jones**, and a new Christmas tree, all of which will be covered by Memorial funds.

Lastly, Michele reminded folks of the retreat on **Saturday, January 27** for the 2024 Council Members. She thanked the outgoing members **Nate Ott**, **Sue Yehling**, and **Jennifer Young** for all their efforts during their terms. **Vice President Krista Skipper** thanked Michele for her leadership the past two years.

'Angels' Narthex Art Exhibit Now Up

The latest Narthex art exhibit with the theme Angels is now up, thanks to the efforts of **Emily Kent** and **Michelle Clemence**. Stop by and peruse the many and varied "takes" on this month's theme.

Additional submissions are always welcome! Both artwork release and artwork description forms can be found on the shelf under the bulletin board next to the Library.

Sign Up Now to Read at Worship Services

Readers for Sunday morning services can now sign up for services over Advent and the winter. Readers, including youth and children, are encouraged to sign up on the sheet on the bulletin board, next to the Library.

Readings are sent out the week before to give folks a chance to go through the lessons ahead of Sunday mornings. **Readers of all ages are encouraged to participate.**

Sunday Adult Ed Forum on Mideast War Available on YouTube

The Sunday, December 17 Adult Ed Forum with Ohio University professor Logan Lybarger talking about the context for the war between Israel and Gaza is now available on Redeemer's YouTube channel at

<https://www.youtube.com/@redeemerlutheranchurchcolu7975> . It was a provocative discussion that raised a lot of issues to contemplate.

Logan teaches courses in the Islamic religious tradition, Sufism, and Political Islam as well as in religious and violence and theories of religion. He lived in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as well as in Egypt for more than eight years during the 1980s and 1990s.

In addition, both Lutheran World Relief (LWR) and Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) will donate 100 percent designated funds to relief work in the Holy Land. Go to <https://tinyurl.com/nc94955d> for LWR or to <https://tinyurl.com/2ywxumtz> for LDR.

2024 Flower Chart Available

Have an event to celebrate or remember? Somebody's birthday to recognize? The chart to sign up for flowers for Sunday services in 2024 is now on the bulletin board next to the library.

Flowers run \$20 and can be paid ahead of the date by using the envelopes that are also available on the bulletin board. The envelope provides additional space for spelling out the designation – information that is shared in *Reflections* and the Sunday bulletin.

Folks can also call **Office Manager Becky Trover** to sign up. Flowers can be taken home after the Sunday service or picked up later in the week.

Noisy Offering to Go to LSS Choices

The Noisy Offering for November and December will be sent to Lutheran Social Services (LSS) Choices. The holidays can be a very stressful time and as a result, the number of people (both men and women) abused by their spouse increases. Many will stay with a spouse because it's the holidays. But once January comes around they find the courage to leave.

Along with the increase in spousal abuse the holidays also see an increase in human trafficking.

Because of this, Redeemer's Noisy Offering will be for LSS Choices during this holiday season so when Redeemer sends the funds in January it will be right when the numbers seeking service are going up.

Some Words in Which I Find Some Wisdom *cont'd from p. 1*

It Felt Light

by the 14th-century Persian poet, **Hafiz**, translated by **Daniel Landinsky**

How did the rose ever open its heart
and give to this world all its beauty?

It felt the encouragement of light against its being.
Otherwise, we all remain too frightened.

Winston Churchill: Those who are not themselves eloquent must content themselves with quoting those who are.

Happy 2024.

Dave Shull

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 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 Care, Tending for Poinsettias

Information from a master gardener via **Brad Binau** via **Kathy Zwanziger** reports that poinsettias should be watered from the bottom. That means cutting the bottom out of the foiled wrapped plants and sitting them in a shallow pan such as a pie tin. “Pour the water into the pan.”

+ + +

Prayers are asked for **Madelyn Zimmer** as she has moved to Colorado to be closer to family. **Sunday, December 17** was her last day worshipping here at Redeemer. Prayers also asked for Ruth Murray’s daughter Ellen Rose receiving medical treatment, and granddaughter Megan whose husband died recently.

+ + +

Prayers for healing continue to be asked for **Pastor Tim Muller** and for **Kathy Richter**, aunt of **Emily Ott**.

January Birthdays

1-Connie Criswell 2-Don Luck
4-Kristen Ullman 5-Tamara Wawrosch
9-Marques Highland 11-Rich Pautsch
13-Michelle Skoog 16-Melissa Vivens
20-David Detweiler 20-Corinne Montgomery
20-Tony Naess 20-Eric Vivens
21-Elizabeth George 21-Shirley Miller
22-Maureen Callahan 22-Shirley Cannon
24-Sophia Brush 24-Marshall Edgington
24-Kathy Rapp 24-Heath Wolfe
25-Rosalie Highland 26-Jeff Montgomery
28-Bebe McCoy

The Wider Church

Happy New Year from Bishop Dillahunt

Southern Ohio Synod Bishop Suzanne Dillahunt writes, “It’s time to get going on the **Journey of Discipleship Together**.”

“As the Body of Christ within the Southern Ohio Synod, we begin his year with a sense of excitement about what this year will bring in our lives – for each of us as individuals as well as for our congregations and ministries. This year begins with us united in God’s love, seeking to grow in our faith together and within our communities.

“The Southern Ohio Synod Staff Team and I pray for you daily, for you to be strengthened as disciples, sharing – heralding – the Good News of Jesus through your lives and ministries.

“We are grateful to partner with you throughout our synod, knowing that we are Stronger and Better Together ... Joining Jesus in the Restoration of the World.

“Let us join in prayer together as we begin this new year:

“God of grace,

“You sent your Son, Jesus, to live, preach, teach, die and rise again so that we have life and the promise of the resurrection. As this new calendar year begins, continue to keep us in grace. Give the world your peace and hope. It is in Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.”

Capital Sponsors ‘Day of Learning’ on MLK Day

Capital University will sponsor its 33rd annual Martin Luther King Jr. “Day of Learning” on **Monday, January 15**. Keynote speakers include **Tobias Spears**, Ph.D., assistant dean for diversity, equity and inclusion officer in the Biological Sciences Division of the University of Chicago, and **Frederick Charles Staidum Jr.**, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of English and affiliate, Institute for Racial Justice at Loyola University Chicago.

In addition, this year’s service project involves collaboration with Star House Columbus. Also, leaders from both campus and the community will facilitate 90-minute workshops around the theme of “Courage in Community.”

To register, go to <https://tinyurl.com/y8p8329b>.

Prayer Concerns from ELCA

3 “Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps, fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command!” (Psalm 148:7-8). Pray for the Spirit to stir our sense of awe for all that God has created and for God’s boundless love for humankind.

4 Human Trafficking Prevention Month Pray that we will work together diligently to prevent sexual slavery, forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation, including online forms of trafficking. Pray for our communities of faith to be safe places of refuge, respect, care and support for victims and survivors of human trafficking, especially young people of all genders and gender identities.

5 Give thanks that God leads us to the light and truth of Jesus Christ — God’s Son, the promised Messiah — when we might wander aimlessly in despair, longing and chaos.

6 Last year there were over 40,000 gun deaths in our country, including suicides (gunviolencearchive.org). Pray for an end to these senseless deaths and the resulting trauma, grief and anguish that spread through our communities and nation. Ask God to lead us out of hopelessness and inaction and to renew our commitment to end gun violence.

7 Baptism of Our Lord Let us give thanks for our baptisms, which marked us as loved and forgiven children of God and welcomed us to a life revitalized and guided by the Spirit. That same Spirit descended upon Jesus during his baptism and accompanied him throughout his life on earth.

8 Pray for the 340 new-start congregations and communities of faith under development in the United States and the Caribbean region, which welcome all God’s people, share Christ’s love and provide spiritual and physical sustenance.

Getting Ready for Worship

Epiphany of Our Lord, January 7, 2024, 10 a.m.

Lessons

Readings: Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29; Mark 1:4-11

Prayer of the Day

Holy God, creator of light and giver of goodness, your voice moves over the waters. Immerse us in your grace, and transform us by your Spirit, that we may follow after your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

A Prayer for Peace

For those who are fleeing: sanctuary

For those who are staying: safety

For those who are fighting: peace.

For those whose hearts are breaking: comfort

For those who see no future: hope.

Intercessions & Thanksgiving

- + For the people of Christ Lutheran Church in Heath.
- + For Redeemer community members Karen and Al Rider.

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, Bonnie Hegreness, Heidi Carman, Mary Kennedy, Kevin Bailey's sister Kleta Childs, Kathie and Nancy Ehrich and their sister Betty Weaver, Jeremy Davis, Bebe McCoy's brother-in-law Walt and her sister Jan, Brittany Parsons, Mary Bowling's sister Val, John Kennedy's niece Michele Wolfe, Becky Trover's sister Maddie Sutphin, Skye Andree, Carolyn Moehring, Kris Kauffman, Mary Watts, Emily Ott's aunt Kathy Richter, Pastor Tim Muller, Ruth Murray's daughter Ellen Rose and granddaughter Megan, John Kennedy's sister and brother-in-law Becky & Vic Wolfe.

Worship Leaders

Presiding Minister	Dave Shull
Assisting Minister	Naomi Morgan
Cantor	Jennifer Young
ASL Interpreter	Bryan Neal
Organist & Senior Choir Director	Kathy Rapp
Pianist & Chime Choir Director	Karen Kent
Usher	Zak Hinkle-Moore
Verger	Michelle Clemence/Wendy Stoica
Hospitality	Michelle Clemence
Communion Prep	Julianne Johnson and Sara Auman
Producers	Sachio Phillips, Toshi Phillips

*Flowers are given by members of Redeemer
Noisy Offering will go to LSS CHOICES for Victims of Domestic Violence*

This Week at Redeemer January 2-January 8, 2024

Tuesday	5:15 p.m.	Outreach Team
Wednesday	12:30 p.m.	<i>Redeemer at LSS Food Pantry</i>
Sunday	8:45 a.m.	Senior Choir Rehearsal
	10 a.m.	IN-PERSON and LIVESTREAM Worship
	11:15 a.m.	IN-PERSON and ZOOM Adult Ed: <i>Assisting Minister Training</i>
Monday	6:30 p.m.	Girl Scouts

Redeemer's mission: To be followers of Jesus, sharing God's love with all
Redeemer's vision: To foster understanding and healing in community
Redeemer's Values: Inclusion, Compassion, Justice