



Reflections

VOLUME 28

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ISSUE 8

What Does the Bible Tell Us about God?

In my reflection yesterday, I invited the congregation – and all Christians – to consider giving up for Lent saying anything like, “*That Old Testament God is so violent and vengeful. The New Testament God is so much more loving.*” I suggested three reasons I thought we should do this.

I had some interesting conversations with a few of you after worship about this. One of you wanted to hear more about one of the points I’d made, so I said I’d write about it for **Reflections**.

Yesterday I said the Bible doesn’t have any recordings or snapshots of things God actually said or did. It only has things the writers tell us God said or did. Everything we read in the Bible was written by someone who was trying to figure out who God was and what God had to do with them, their communities, human history, and the larger world. And, like any of us, when the writers sat down to write about what they observed, experienced, and believed about God, they weren’t a blank slate. They brought to their writing task their biases, prejudices, assumptions, hopes, and fears. And all of these shaped what they wrote about God.

In my reflection, I gave an example that many Christians point to when we talk about how violent *that Old Testament God* is. The book of Joshua tells the story about the Hebrew people conquering the people who happened to be living in the land they believed God had promised to give them. The writers of Joshua say God orders the people to destroy any of these original inhabitants if they aren’t willing to believe in God. So the storytellers tell us God commands genocide.

Does that mean it is God’s will for people to carry out acts of genocide?

If you believe the story of Joshua tells us something about God, then perhaps you have to answer *Yes*.

However, if you believe that the only thing this story tells us is that the writers believed God ordered genocide, then you can conclude this story tells us nothing about God. I suggested in my reflection an idea about why they would have told the story in this way. Perhaps they believed God wanted them to have a land they could live in so badly that God was willing to do anything for them to have a land to call their own, including killing the original inhabitants. The writers felt God favored them over all other people, and God showed that by giving them permission to kill anyone who might prevent them for living in this land.

However, we don’t just find violent stories in the Jewish Scriptures. There are violent stories in the Christian Scriptures as well. In yesterday’s reflection, I talked about how Christians invented the idea of hell as a place of eternal separation from God and eternal torment. Judaism doesn’t have anything like that. In my mind, such an idea is a uniquely abhorrent and violent one. And a number of stories in the Christian Scriptures talk about people who don’t do what God wants and don’t believe what God wants who are sent to hell. It would be understandable for Jews reading such stories to say, “*Look at that violent New Testament God who sends people to suffer in hell for all eternity! What kind of a God is that?*”

In the end, we can’t be sure that what we read in the Bible tells us anything about what God actually said or did. They simply tell us what the writers’ biases, prejudices, assumptions, hopes, and fears led them to believe about God and God’s relationship to them and to the world around them. And we cannot assume these are the same at all.

So I don’t believe we can talk about *that violent Old Testament God* just like those of other faiths can’t talk about *that violent New Testament God* because it’s very possible God wants nothing to do with the violence which the writers of either testament have said God supports. I’m happy to be in conversation with any of you who would like to explore this – or anything else!

Dave Shull

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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

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Vice President - Brad Binau

Finance Officer - Laura Warren

Secretary - Sue Watson

Worship - Michelle Clemence

Education - Katie Jacobs

Outreach - Diane Brobeck

Member Support - Elyce Herring

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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

Redeemer BREAD Network Meeting Set for Feb. 21

On **Wednesday, February 21**, the BREAD Redeemer Network Members will hold a quick meeting for BREAD updates and Nehemiah Action planning at 6 p.m. This will be done in time for attendees to worship at the Lenten Midweek Service at 7 p.m. It is both in-person and on Zoom. To watch the meeting on Zoom, go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83987123983?pwd=bmxTeE4zbDR5NG1EYzN0dUtTTHFUZz09>; Meeting ID: 839 8712 3983; Passcode: 814621.

Kristi Hildebrand, reports, “I heard a comment the other day where someone asked when we were going to stop reading books about the issues and start seeking solutions. That was the point that the Anti-Racism Team at Redeemer was at in the spring of 2021. Members were overwhelmed with concerns and feelings and looking for a way to really make a difference. As **Sue Watson** said, ‘I joined BREAD because it is doing what I want to do: make changes that benefit ALL people!’ BREAD works because they are thorough, persistent, organized, and serious about what matters. I need to be part of that effort because it’s time to move from learning to *doing*.”

“The biggest contribution that Redeemer makes to BREAD during the year is to attend the Nehemiah Action. BREAD works all year on identifying solutions to issues and needs organized people power to encourage our elected officials to consider them. Mark your calendars now for May 21, 2024 and plan to attend! (Please note: the date for the Nehemiah Action had originally been set for May 14 but has been changed to May 21. Please make sure you have the correct date!”)

BREAD Upcoming Dates

Redeemer Network Meeting: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 at 6 p.m., Room 2.

BREAD Rally: Monday April 15 at 7 p.m., Congregation Tifereth Israel, 1354 E. Broad St.

Nehemiah Action: Tuesday, May 21, 6:15 p.m. registration, Celeste Center.

BREAD Celebration!: Monday, June 24 at 7 p.m., location TBD.

Adult Ed Class to Hear from Emily Kent



Emily Kent writes, “When the inevitable happens, we are often not prepared. A beautiful time of transition might instead be a time of chaos, anxiety, and stress. Come learn about planning for a good death, the role of a death doula, and how we can reconnect to an essential part of being human.”

She will be speaking to the Adult Ed Class on **Sunday, February 25**, beginning after the worship service, about 11:15 a.m. in Room 2.

Time to Order Easter Flowers!!

Because Easter is early this year, now is the time to order lilies and tulips for Easter Sunday. Lilies this year are \$12 per container. The tulips come in yellow, red, purple, or pink and are \$8 per container.

The deadline to order is **Sunday, February 25**. To order; complete the front of the envelope, place cash or check in the envelope and seal. Then put the completed envelope with payment in the offering plate. The envelopes to order can be found on the bulletin board outside the library.

The other way to order is to contact the office by email, noting what flowers, how many and total cost. Also include the dedication for the bulletin. Then send a check to the church for the order, noting it is for “Easter Flowers.”

Any questions regarding ordering flowers, should be directed to **Kay Ernsthansen** at KAErnsthansen@gmail.com.

Sister Act to Sponsor ‘World Day of Prayer’ Luncheon

Sister Act is inviting members and friends of Redeemer to join them at a noon luncheon here at the church on **Friday March 1** to participate in the World Day of Prayer. “Sharing a meal and conversation about prayer is our way to contribute positively to the profoundly important task of asking God to guide us in our search for peace in the world.

“We hope to have guests who will share their prayer lives with us.”

Tuesday Bible Study Looking at Letter of James

Continuing on **Tuesday, February 20**, the Tuesday Bible study will begin a study of the Letter of James. The group meets at 1 p.m. here at the church. It runs until 2:30 p.m.

RLC's Souper Bowl 2024 Raises \$1,422

Kathy Zwanziger writes to the congregation, "I should have known that I did not need to ask you to be generous with your contributions for the LSS Food Pantry through our Souper Bowl challenge. You have **always** been generous in helping our neighbors! Sunday we raised \$1,422!

"As in several of the past years, the 'commercials' won by a landslide: \$1,183. The Kansas City Chiefs were next with \$152. The San Francisco 49ers garnered \$87. There were also several canned items contributed, which will be taken to the pantry.

"Thank you all for your contributions of money and food – and to all those of you who contribute your time to distribute the food to clients. We are God's hands."

Kathy also reports that this year's total more than doubles the amount Redeemer raised last year which was \$626.

The "real life" Super Bowl saw the Chiefs become the first team in 20 years to win back-to-back Super Bowls with their 25-22 win over the 49ers in overtime.

Art Exhibit Features Paintings by Cody Miller

The latest art exhibit has been installed in the Narthex. This one features paintings by **Cody Miller**, both those that belong to the church and others that are on loan by members. Stop by and enjoy his depictions of Bible stories and characters.

Noisy Offering to Go to Star House

Redeemer's "Noisy Offering" will now go to Star House – a drop-in center for youth experiencing homelessness and the only housing village of its kind in Central Ohio for college-age youth who are exiting homelessness. Young people experiencing homelessness, ages 14-24, are provided a safe location along with basic needs and access to crucial, stabilizing resources.

In addition, Star House, along with the Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority and Finance Fund, jointly owns and operates Carol Stewart Village, an affordable neighborhood for youth coming out of homelessness. It has 62 studio apartments and onsite access to a wide array of programs and social services.

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.**

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

Prayers for healing are asked for **Heidi Carman** who had surgery last week and for **Kathie Ehrich** who is having surgery this week.

+ + +

Pastor Dave Shull will be away **Friday-Saturday, February 23-24** for his brother-in-law's wedding. Emergency pastoral care coverage will be provided by the **Rev. Julianne Smeck** who can be reached at 734-972-6126.

February Birthdays

24-Linda Williams

24-Sue Yehling 26-Diane Brobeck

26-Wally Jacobs 28-Colton Day

The Wider Church

HopeWood Pines Maple Syrup Festival Seeks Volunteers

With the HopeWood Pines – formerly Lutheran Memorial Camp – Maple Syrup Festival approaching, volunteers are being sought to work on the **Friday and Saturday, March 8 and 9** before as well as on the day of the festival, **Sunday, March 10.**

Volunteer tasks on Friday and Saturday include decorating, cleaning up the grounds and the Maple Sugar shelter, clearing hiking trails and cleaning the restroom facilities. Tasks on the day of the festival for which volunteers are needed include setting up for and serving at the pancake brunch, helping with parking, assisting in the kitchen, cashier, kids crafts and more.

To volunteer, go to the HopeWood website at <http://tinyurl.com/5bwck8kp>.

Trinity Seminary Sponsors Nelson Lecture Series

Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University will hold the Nelson Lectures on **Wednesday and Thursday, March 13-14** when **Jeremy Gillett** and **Pastor Jenny Sung** will speak.

Gillett will discuss “Black and Twenty-five in America” on Wednesday as he shares a series of vignettes about the lives of young Black people in America and mobilizes audiences around the country towards empathy and compassion for humanity through stories that explore issues of race, class, gender, and identity.

Sung will speak on Thursday on “God with Us: Seeing God in People around the World.” An ordained minister, Sung has been preaching, writing, and curating spaces worldwide for healing through brave love and community art. Rev. Sung’s passion for art comes from her many years as a professional modern dancer, founder, and co-director of One Dance Company in the Twin Cities.

Both events begin at 7 p.m. in the Huntington Recital Hall at Capital. They are free and open to the public.

Prayer Concerns from ELCA

February 20 Ask God to bless the work of the ELCA Organizing for Mission Network, a community of leaders and resource providers who use the principles of community organizing to develop, redevelop and renew gospel-centered communities that act for the sake of the world and the well-being of our neighbor.

21 The cross has become widespread in art, jewelry, clothing and popular culture around the world. Reflect on the symbol and the true meaning of the cross for those who find salvation and identity in Christ.

22 Remember in prayer those who helped you become the child of God you are today -- siblings in Christ, parents and family, church leaders, teachers, friends, strangers, mentors and influential people who have gone before us.

23 Promise to learn God's ways and truth and to integrate them into your daily life, that we might operate from a firm foundation of love, wisdom and justice when struggling to discern right from wrong and to relate to one another.

24 Pray for the work of the ELCA Peace Not Walls campaign, which seeks a just and lasting resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and connects ELCA members with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, the Lutheran World Federation and ecumenical companions across the Middle East.

25 Do you know someone celebrating a momentous occasion -- a birth, an anniversary, recovery from illness or injury? Let their joy be your joy, and lift up prayers of thanksgiving to God.

26 Pray that we will not grow weary of serving our neighbors in need, both nearby and around the world. Ask the Spirit to renew us when we feel overwhelmed by human needs

The Community Beyond

Feb. 20 Is Deadline to Register to Vote in March Primary

Tomorrow, **Tuesday, February 20** is the deadline to register to vote in the **Tuesday, March 19** primary. Voters may go to VoteOhio.gov to register online or update an existing registration. Voter registration forms can also be printed or obtained from a county board of elections office.

Absentee voting for the March 19 primary then begins on **Wednesday, February 21**, via in-person or by mail-in absentee ballot. Again, more information is available at the above link.

Getting Ready for Worship

Second Sunday in Lent, February 25, 2024, 10 a.m.

Lessons

Readings: Romans 4:17-25; Psalm 22:24-31; Mark 8:31-38

Prayer of the Day

O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life. Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of 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 First English Lutheran Church in Columbus.

+ For Redeemer community members Michele, Rob, Izzy, Sophie and Andy Skoog.

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, 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, Emily Ott's aunt Kathy Richter, Ruth Murray's daughter Ellen Rose, John Kennedy's sister and brother-in-law Becky and Vic Wolfe, Kathie Ehrich and the Ehrich family; Terry Warren's sister Elaine Warren, and Terry and Laura Warren's son-in-law Dan Patterson.

Worship Leaders

Presiding Minister	Dave Shull
Assisting Minister	Karen Rider
Cantor	Heidi Sherer
ASL Interpreter	Bryan Neal
Organist & Senior Choir Director	Kathy Rapp
Pianist & Chime Choir Director	Karen Kent
Usher	Ruth Murray
Verger	Michelle Clemence/Wendy Stoica
Hospitality	Kathy Mimlitch
Communion Prep	Katie and Ruby Jacobs, Karen Rider
Producers	Judith Bird, April Smith

*No altar flowers during Lent
Noisy Offering will go to Star House center for youth.*

This Week at Redeemer February 19- February 26, 2024

Monday	5:30 p.m.	Girl Scouts Troop 2462
	6:30 p.m.	Girl Scouts Troop 1143
Tuesday	1:00 p.m.	Bible Study
Wednesday	12:00 p.m.	Lenten Soup and Discussion
	6:00 p.m.	ZOOM BREAD network
	7:00 p.m.	IN-PERSON and LIVESTREAM Lenten Evening Prayer
Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Chime Choir Rehearsal
Sunday	8:45 a.m.	Senior Choir Rehearsal
	10 a.m.	IN-PERSON and LIVESTREAM Worship
	11:15 a.m.	Adult Ed IN-PERSON and ZOOM – Emily Kent and Death Doula information
	12:30 p.m.	Youth Gathering
Monday	6:30 p.m.	Girl Scouts Troop 1143

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