

Tidings

December 2023–
February 2024



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A Letter from Pastor Lisa

Dear Redeemer Friends in Christ,

The war has changed me. A daughter living and working in a war zone has changed me. Feeling profoundly out of step with both American political parties has changed me. Reading the old texts of the Bible with the inescapable context of today has changed me. Who would have thought we'd experience both a pandemic and a regional war in the span of five years?

Hearing every day from Maddi helps to reassure me, though the bits she learns from her friends in Palestine—what the news media doesn't report until days later, if at all—they haunt me. I've shared a few of those tragic bits before we begin "prayers of the people" on Sunday mornings.

Most of the messaging from the Wisconsin Christians for Justice in Palestine has focused on the catastrophic loss of children's lives, and our swelling heap of children's shoes in the Sanctuary poignantly illustrates their growing absence. However, in the refugee camps near Bethlehem (close to where Maddi lives), those who bear the brunt of this war's terrors are teenage and grown men. Every night these camps are invaded by Israeli soldiers, who round up and detain the males of these communities. Maddi's Arabic teacher and a close friend have taken to sleeping with their clothes on . . . if sleep comes at all.

There's a "readiness" we often meditate upon in Christian circles in the Advent season. It is meant to be a season of waiting—waiting for something profoundly good, something miraculously wonderful. This year I can't help but pray for the children, yes, but also the men of Dheisha camp and Aida camp—just that they will awake in the bed and the home in which they surrendered to sleep.

In Jesus, the Prince of Peace,
Pastor Lisa



Wisconsin Christians for Justice in Palestine meet every other Wednesday in Redeemer Lower Lounge; the next meeting is December 13th!

Upcoming Events

REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH

Celebrate Christmas

OPEN SANCTUARY

Wednesdays 4:30-6:00 PM
Time to pray and reflect.

BLUE CHRISTMAS

December 21st at 6:30 PM
St. Paul's, 2812 W. Wisconsin Ave

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

December 24th at 10:00 AM
December 24th at 4:00 PM
No Christmas Day Worship



DEC 17th | 10 AM Welcome New Members

Join us on Sunday, December 17th to welcome new members with a reception to follow!

JAN 9th | 1:30 PM Weekly Bible Study Begins

Join Pastor Lisa in Redeemer's lower lounge on Mondays for Bible Study beginning Jan 9.

JAN 28th | 11:15 AM Annual Meeting

Meet in the auditorium after worship to go over the 2023 annual report.

FEB 14th | TBA Ash Wednesday

Save the date for Ash Wednesday worship!



Happy Holidays

A Letter from Jeff Bray

From Your Music Director...

Serving as Music Director in my third year, I'm honored to offer my greatest life joys (liturgical music and music leadership) to the Redeemer community. It's a ministry of love—working collaboratively with Pastor Lisa and Alex, congregation members, and guest musicians I have met along the way.

As choir director, I'm excited to welcome three new singers to the choir, Harry and Mary Huizinga, and Charles Smith. We're grateful for the return of Dave Rothe. On Sunday November 12th, we were blessed to have members of Chant Claire join us, sharing their vocal talents and collaborating liturgically with us. Special thanks to ongoing partnership with Chant Claire!

In Advent, the Choir will sing about waiting, being ready, and taking comfort in the hope of the arriving Christmas Season. Choir will rehearse Christmas Choral Music on December 10th, 17th, and 24th and sing at the Christmas Eve service at 4pm. Please see me at the piano after services if you would like to sing in the Christmas Choir this year. Agreeing to do so does NOT commit you to singing in the choir forever, so what have you got to lose? Let's sing pretty for Christmas.

Lastly, the 1/2 hour before the Christmas Eve service starts, (3:30-4pm) I am seeking musical performances for Christmas/Advent themed music for an extended period of prelude music. If you would like to sing a song, play a Christmas piece on piano or other instrument, please let me know. Young people are particularly encouraged to offer their talents by playing something they are learning with their music teachers or school choirs. I am willing to learn music to accompany you, if you'd like additional support to offer your musical gifts.

As always, if you have music you'd like to suggest or have questions about choir, worship songs, etc., please e-mail me at music@redeemermilwaukee.org.

Blessings to you...

Jeff Bray - Redeemer Director of Music



Fearless & Faithful Update

This progress report reflects the current campaign total after 3 years of fundraising and outlines how we hope to achieve our goal of \$5.5 million. I recall our first meeting with a professional fundraising consultant in December 2020. So much has happened since then!

We determined we could manage the campaign with the talent and dedication of Redeemer disciples and eliminated the cost of the consultant. We navigated all of the challenges of the COVID pandemic. We dreamed and planned for ministry in a reimagined building – a building that would actually work to make our ministries stronger.

The renovation project has grown in need and scope. The overall cost of the project has jumped because of the needed changes in renovation plans for an old neglected building, including a change to a new hot water heating system to replace a leaking steam system; replacing rather than repairing the west wing roof; the effects of inflation, supply chain and labor related cost increases; and a later start date. The Construction team has verified it is now a \$5.5-million-dollar project.

In total, as of November 30, 2023, we have raised \$3.7 million in cash and pledged commitments. Because of you good people of Redeemer, our congregation has raised \$2.5 million of that \$3.7 million. (After that professional consultant said he did not think Redeemer's community could generate \$500 thousand toward the campaign!) The remaining \$1.2 million has been raised through our partner congregations, foundations and, philanthropic support from non-members who share our vision for ministry at Redeemer.

Phase 2 construction will begin in Spring 2024, after a short hiatus after phase 1 is completed in December. Through the leadership of associate members Brenda Skelton, who leads the foundation philanthropic effort, and Kathy Clark, who leads the Individual philanthropic and community partners portion, we are striving to raise the remaining \$1.8 million to fully achieve our campaign goal. Financing a small portion could be a consideration but – especially with current interest rates – we would like to avoid that if possible.

We are so BLESSED to have a community of believers who have dug deep to make this project a reality, including the generous response to our “second round” requests after the project budget increase.

As we enter into Advent season this year, we look forward eagerly to Advent 2024 when we plan to achieve the vision of a Redeemer that serves as a beacon of hope to our neighbors at 19th & Wisconsin for the next 100 years!

Thank you for your fearlessness and faithfulness,
Jon Jacobs, Fearless & Faithful Campaign Chair



Construction Team Update

Friends,

Wow! Did this year go by fast or what?! Phase 1 of the construction project is all but complete and design/planning is well underway for Phase 2! As a reminder Phase 1 is exterior deferred maintenance, a new air handler for the sanctuary, and a new electrical service to the building. Phase 2 is the larger interior build-out for mission partners/mental health center and event space, as well as significant renovation on the mechanical system and flat roofing. I'd love to share some of the stories that have come from the last year of work.

As work has been completed, some scope was modified to accommodate the next phase of construction. An example of this is replacing a small area of roofing that was under a new mechanical unit on the roof and putting off some masonry restoration near the current garage as there's significant work in that area for Phase 2. This redistribution of work has allowed us to save some money in the long run while staying flexible with the future design for Phase 2.

Catalyst has been a great partner through this project communicating their needs well, being thoughtful regarding their impact on our ministry, and coordinating the flow of work onsite. However, no construction project goes without its challenges. One challenge that came up was the gutters at the sanctuary. After a favorable inspection report from the design consultant, our roofing contractor found that these gutters were anything but favorable. After multiple meetings, we found that active leaks in the sanctuary were likely due to the status of the gutters. Because of the immediate need to repair active leaks, we will be proceeding with these repairs at an additional cost and increasing the scope of work. These were tough conversations but the right thing to do.

Looking forward, there's a lot to be excited about! User group meetings occur throughout the design process for the design team to fully understand the needs of the space. Some user group meetings for our project include the event space subcommittee, kitchen subcommittee, Sunday school subcommittee, mental health partners, and mission partners. This can be a lot to organize and wrap our arms around! However, we have the right team with a good understanding of the history of Redeemer as a congregation and the building. We're hopeful to start construction in the Spring of 2024 with Occupancy by December 2024. Feel free to contact me or stop me after service if you have any questions!

Peace,
Donnie Bogle-Boesiger
Email: donnieboboe@gmail.com
Cell: 414-905-3054
Head of Construction Committee



Volunteer Spotlight!

Elaine Lindstrom

What prompted you to volunteer at Redeemer?

I was prompted to volunteer at Redeemer because I was a former member of the church and I had some extra time on my hands.

Where did you grow up? Were you raised in a faith tradition?

I grew up in Milwaukee at Redeemer Church until about age 23.

What's your favorite Bible story/verse and why?

My favorite Bible story is Noah's Ark. I enjoy hearing about him saving all of the animals and his family. I think it teaches an important lesson.



If you had a completely free day, what would you choose to do?

If I had a completely free day I would like to do some quilting, baking, and reading. I also like to do water aerobics and go for walks. I also enjoy spending time with my friends and family.

What has surprised you during your time volunteering at Redeemer so far?

I am surprised by how many people we are serving and what a great crew is on hand all the time!



Reconciling in Christ Corner

What images cross your mind when you think of the Christmas season? Lots of lights? Santa? A well-decorated Christmas tree? Presents? Smiles, laughter? Family...

For many in marginalized communities, including the LGBTQIA+, families look different. In fact, they may not be there. There are slightly varied statistics but the impact is still heavy – roughly 25% of youth report being homeless at some point after coming out, and over 60% report being rejected by their immediate family also.



NO MATTER WHAT... WE ARE ALL STILL PART OF GOD'S FAMILY.

Besides the important work Reconciling Works does to spread this word, two other noteworthy groups that support these young people to know that they are loved include:

- **www.thetrevorproject.org – The Trevor Project** is a mental health crisis line that is open 24/7 and offers resources and a trained specialist to listen and support callers to move towards next steps.
- **www.couragemke.org – Courage MKE** not only provides local housing for displaced Milwaukee LGBTQIA+ youth, but provides other direct resources needed to thrive.



At Redeemer – we continue to welcome ALL of God's children into OUR family!

-Lisa Miller, Redeemer RIC Lead

Council Updates

The Thanksgiving holiday may be officially over but there is still time of gratitude to God, whose guidance and care go before us and whose love is with us forever. There's a lot to be thankful for here at Redeemer, and Church Council would like to express its gratitude for your continued growth in faith and support of the many ministries that take place throughout the year.

We give thanks to many who work behind the scenes, including Redeemer's newest nursery room attendants Kaiyla Chavez and Erin Connelly. Kaiyla is a graduate student and Erin is an undergraduate student at Marquette University. They both serve active roles during Sunday worship services, and we are blessed with their passion for working with infants and toddlers. By having the nursery back up and running, it is with the hope that more families with younger children will be encouraged to attend worship on Sundays.

A HUGE thanks goes out to Redeemer's communications and administrative specialist, Alex Habeck. Alex's hard work and dedication got us through the COVID-19 pandemic, and she continues to go above and beyond what is expected of her many skillful talents. She does it all, from answering phone calls to printing bulletins, taking charge of Sunday worship live stream, assisting with the food pantry, coordinating the Noon Run Meal, and so much more!!! It's a joy to work alongside Alex, and we will continue to pray for her new and upcoming endeavor(s) in the New Year.

In mid-October, Church Council agreed to establish an independent 501(c)3 called Olga Neighborhood Wellness Services. It is named after Redeemer's legendary cook, Olga Geuder, whose husband suffered decades of mental illness and alcoholism - all characteristics of neighborhood services that Redeemer hopes to offer through the mission partner space. This nonprofit employer identification number (EIN) makes it possible for people and other organizations, who are blocked from contributing to specific churches, to donate towards Redeemer's mission partners that will enhance the well-being of Milwaukee's Near West Side neighborhood.

Winter is here, and there is still so much to do before the year's end. Treasurer Chan Tran and Bookkeeper Lisa Walter are in the planning stage for 2024's annual budget. It's thrilling to think that Phase II of the Fearless and Faithful renovation project is expected to begin sometime around mid-April; however, the construction will have significant impacts during the summer months (e.g., weddings, building use, administrative functions). There will be some challenges, but Church Council is already finding creative ways to work around them. Redeemer's future is looking very bright! More news to come at Redeemer's annual meeting on January 28.

Speaking of 'bright'...we are now entering one of the brightest seasons of the church year - Advent. It's an exciting time with so much spiritual enlightenment. The light that came into the world at Bethlehem is meant to shine everywhere, and by God's grace we are rays of that light that reaches out to others - not only in Milwaukee but also throughout the world.

We give thanks for all the gifts you have given and also the talents you have shared at Redeemer.

Peace and joy to you and your family this Advent and Christmas season!

Volunteer Opportunities

Food Pantry & Noon Run Volunteers Needed during Marquette's Winter Break!

Food Pantry

Thursdays from 10:30 AM-12:30 PM

Help set up, sort food, and distribute groceries to our neighbors.

Contact: jacobsje49@gmail.com

Noon Run

Sundays from 11:15 AM-12:30 PM

Prepare soup and sandwiches, serve food to our all who want a free lunch.

Contact: myrandyl@charter.net



Worship Volunteers & Livestreaming



If you are interested in helping lead worship as a liturgical assistant, reader, or communion assistant or if you would like to help with livestreaming the worship services to our YouTube channel, please email admin@redeermilwaukee.org.

THANK YOU!

Thank You!

Redeemer family,

As many of you know, my time as Communications and Administrative Specialist is coming to an end. I am completing my MBA in December and was hired before graduation at Milwaukee Area Technical College. I will be working on the college advancement team as their Foundation Operations Specialist! I am really excited for this next part of my career, but will miss working at Redeemer dearly.

I never imagined how impactful working at Redeemer would be when I applied to this position two years ago. I feel so blessed that this job has provided me with a community and lifelong friendships. I am most thankful for all the amazing people I have met over the past two years. Redeemer's members, volunteers, and neighbors have a piece of my heart forever.

I want to take the time to thank you all for supporting me these past two years. I am so incredibly proud of the work we did (and will continue to do)! I would not have been able to do my job without the leadership of Pastor Lisa, Jeff, Randy, Joan, Tim, Cheryl, Bill T., Dorothy, Bill S, Judy, the council, and the countless other volunteers who have helped with Noon Run, Food Pantry, administrative needs, and worship planning. Redeemer is full of dedicated people who show the love of Jesus through their time and resources; words cannot describe my gratitude and appreciation for everything you all do!

With all that being said, you won't miss me too much! I am looking forward to being involved at Redeemer in other ways, including as a member, volunteer, and on Olga's board of directors. I can't wait to see everything else we accomplish together and to continue God's work on 19th and Wisconsin.

Many blessings,
Alex Habeck

