

RedeemerReview

Green Light



We've planned. We've talked. We've prayed. We've disagreed. We've adjusted. We've discerned. We've voted. And now, as we get ready to head into a new year, we've got ourselves a nice green light.

Like a driver at an intersection with a bright green light, there comes a time when we just need to go for it. Look both ways and then hit the gas. Commit. Head on down the road.

Back on May 8, when I first publicly cast a vision for becoming a multisite church meeting in two locations, I talked about a series of preliminary green lights that we'd already received – a possible new location, a positive reaction from our bishop, etc.

Now, six months later, we've seen more green lights along the way: two generous partnership grants, a free church building, an enthusiastic launch team, a definitive congregational vote in favor of going forward, and twenty new members joining us in November, to name just a few.

As we now begin to look at the next stretch of road in front of us and gently take our foot off the brake, we begin to see a series of green lights up ahead.

For example, at the beginning of November we began to get to know and work with Matt Stuhlmuller, a promising seminary student who has

been approved as a mission developer by our denomination.

During the next few months Matt and his wife, Stephanie, will be in a discernment process (along with the rest of us) as we explore whether this might be a good fit going forward with Matt as the new mission developer at the North Avenue location beginning next summer. Nothing is definite yet, but so far, so good.

Green light.

Another potential green light is a tentative proposal from the bishop's office to fund some special consulting and coaching as we enter into this multisite transition. They are very much interested in, and supportive of, Redeemer as a new model of doing ministry. Again, nothing is definite at this stage, but it's looking very possible.

Green light.

As we begin to apply the gas and gain momentum through things like the launch team and the possibility of Pastor Carol's return to Redeemer in the new year, let's keep a couple of driving tips in mind.

First of all, *let's go do this together*. We didn't all vote the same way on this. And yet, as we head on down the road, we need, more than ever, to remember the

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January 2012

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On December 18
there will be a
combined
worship service
at 10:30
for the
Children's
Christmas
Program. See
p. 8 for details.

Green Light



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deep unity we share in Christ and our commitment to our vision and purposes. When it comes to those things, the light is always green.

Second, *let's go forward remembering that we're committed to becoming a vibrant, reproducing congregation in both places.* You'll be hearing a lot about "apprentices" and "reproducing leaders" in the coming year. And here's why: We *already* have an enormous untapped potential for greater ministry effectiveness and personal growth right here. We'll be looking for ways to help each other see our own personal green lights for ministry.

Finally, *let's go with a sense of hopeful expectation* that God has called us into something big, and public, and absolutely worth it.

The light is green, and burning, and bright. In the power and love of Christ, let's go do this.

-Pastor Fred

Vision and Strategy Team Stays Busy

On October 23, Redeemer held a special congregational meeting to vote on a resolution put forth by the Vision and Strategy Team (VST). Contained in that resolution was a proposal to:

- 1) Go forward with the mission plant on North Avenue (former location of Atonement Lutheran Church).
- 2) Form a call committee for a mission developer for the Chicago site and part-time associate pastor for Park Ridge.
- 3) Form a capital campaign committee, who will launch a capital campaign in support of the resolution.

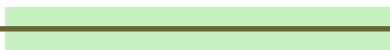
As most of you know, the resolution passed with 80% of those voting members present in favor. Since the vote, VST has been discussing timelines and next steps to move the plan forward.

Most notably, VST is in agreement that we recommend that our congregation extend a call to Pastor Carol Breimeier to return to Redeemer in an 80% full-time position. Her focus would be on the Park Ridge site, and would be instrumental in continuing to position our current site for future growth and leadership development. A proposed salary and benefits package has been approved by an executive committee and will be put before the VST at their December meeting. We will call another special congregational meeting in January to vote on this addition to staff. If approved, Pastor Carol could be in a position to fill this role in early February.

VST has also begun discussions regarding the forthcoming capital campaign. The goal of the campaign will be to raise \$500,000 in support of staffing, programming, and capital improvements for both the Park Ridge and North Avenue sites. VST has identified some potential members for the campaign and has also worked through some rough timelines. Our goal is to coordinate the pledge to the capital campaign with our annual pledge Sunday, where we ask members and regular attenders to pledge their financial support to the general fund for the coming year. Commitment Sunday is generally in mid-May.

If you are interested in participating in any aspect of the capital campaign, please contact Conni Brown or Pastor Fred. There will be many facets to this project and many hands will be needed to ensure a successful campaign.

-Conni Brown



Treasurer's Report

Prior to voting on the annual budget for the 2011/2012 fiscal years, we prepared some preliminary projected financial statements for the 2010/2011 fiscal year. Well, the final numbers are in and break down as follows:

	ACTUAL	PRELIMINARY	DIFFERENCE
Income	\$381,589	\$379,500	\$2,089
Expenses	\$373,193	\$415,670	(\$42,477)
Balance	\$8,396	(\$36,170)	\$44,566



The increase on the income side came through additional contributions. So thank you! The bulk of the expense difference (\$34,394) lies in the category of General Operations. Capital Projects came in approximately \$30,000 below what was projected, primarily due to delays in service and billing for the new fire alarm system. Much of the remaining decrease in spending came in the category of staff expenses (\$4,394) in large part to a delay in some planned minor repairs to the building. The balance is spread out in smaller amounts among most of the other categories. This overage will be rolled into the funds for the 2011/2012 year.

In addition to our budgeted giving, other specific fundraiser income totaled \$23,230, which is tremendous.

We also have first quarter numbers in for 2011/2012. Here is how they compare to last year at the same time.

	YTD 9/30/11	YTD 9/30/10	DIFFERENCE
Income	\$84,525	\$83,783	\$742
Expenses	\$102,355	\$103,104	\$748
Balance	(\$17,829)	(\$19,320)	\$1,491

Additionally, other non-budgeted contributions totaled \$2,856 through September 30.

Some key things to note are that as of October, the new roof has been fully paid for out of the insurance proceeds (\$272,000) and the bill for the fire alarm system is waiting to be paid. When we look at total cash in the bank and back out the funds still available for Pastor Fred's Prison Survival Guide and the commitment for the fire alarm system, we have approximately \$89,000 of available cash assuming the balance of the budgeted numbers for 2011/2012 hold true.

Please also note that if you are looking at the first quarter revenue and thinking that we are way off track from last year, don't worry. Our contributions are not received proportionately throughout the year, so we expected to see revenue at about this level. If you are interested in seeing any of the underlying detail for either period, please feel free to contact me. In short, the church is on solid footing as we move into the holiday season. So thank you Redeemer for your generosity and commitment to changing lives!

-Tom Murtagh

Last Chance to Say Cheese!

It's your last chance to get your picture taken for our directory update! We'll issue an update after the first of the year, so be sure to get your picture taken and your information updated. Just look for the guy with the camera after services.



Done and Done and Done and ‘Done’



That’s right... four times *done*.

In the September-October edition of the *Redeemer Review* we talked about how we were still juggling four major renovation projects: the roof, the fire alarm system, the floor in the Family Room, and the new meeting room downstairs. We can’t tell you how happy it makes us (and what relief and satisfaction it gives us) to be able to say that all of those projects are now *done*. Everything (well, almost) has now been installed, inspected, signed off on, and is up and running.

The only outstanding piece is the furnishing of the new meeting room. Although it’s very pleasant and usable now, we’re still waiting for some new tables to arrive, and then we’ll install some shelving and a small coffee bar area in the new year.

Once again, thanks go out to everyone who helped usher these projects to their completion. Job well done, everyone! *What a blessing it is to be able to enjoy such a nice facility.*

Transitions

Esme Vivienne Piolet, daughter of **Nora and Andy Piolet**, was baptized on October 9.

Olivia Daggett, daughter of **Susan and Robert Daggett**, was baptized on October 30.

On November 20, we welcomed twenty new people into membership at Redeemer: **Mike, Maria, and Michael Anzalotti; Katie Beamsley; Tony Capicchioni; Elisabeth, Samuel, and Katherine Deike; Brian Higgins; Sara Miller; Dan, Nancy, Adam, and Tom Monroe; Jodi Slattery; Christin Sullivan; Antoinette Tiu; and Victoria, Elijah, and Isaiah Vilanova.**

Focus on *EVANGELISM*



News from Mission Control

Since our historic vote on October 23 to launch a second site on North Avenue in Chicago, our new Redeemer Launch Team has been busy. We’ve had 24 people participate in several launch team meetings. Each month we gather as a large group to engage in some leadership development, exploring our own identity as leaders and key principles of leadership.

In coming months we’ll look at important leadership traits, steps to relational apprenticeship, and more. Our move to become a multisite church is more than having a second location. It’s about exponentially reproducing more leaders who can find ways to serve the Lord more effectively and joyfully.

In addition to the leadership development piece, we’re also working in purpose-drive “working teams,” brainstorming and planning for ministry at the North Avenue location. Each working team is busy formulating a ministry plan, timeline, and working budget for the coming year. It’s exciting to see the enthusiasm that’s being unleashed for this new mission venture and to see things begin to take shape.

As we move forward in mission together, we’d love to expand our ranks. So, if you think you might want to check out the launch team, please speak to Pastor Fred, Pastor Carol, or Mike Willis.

Welcome Surprises

There have been a number of surprising and encouraging developments recently.

Our new next-door neighbor on North Avenue, Charter One Bank, has been extremely welcoming and accommodating. They are currently repaving the parking lot, installing new lighting, and erecting some new fencing on the site next door to the church. They reaffirmed their commitment to let us use that new parking lot as well as their major parking lot on the other side of the bank. In addition, since that location is Charter One's corporate headquarters, they have a lot of meeting, conference, and training rooms that they have offered to us to use – free of charge!

Another new (and unexpected) development is the growing possibility that the Metro Chicago Synod will be offering to pay a substantial amount of money for us to receive expert consulting help and ongoing coaching support from Intentional Impact as we transition into becoming a multisite church. These consultants specialize in this kind of work and could be an invaluable resource for us going forward. We'll update you as we get more information, but things are moving fast, and we may begin the consulting work in January.



Behind Bars or Writing Letters?

You choose.

As of the end of November, Pastor Fred's upcoming book, **Spiritual Survival Guide to Prison and Beyond**, is finished and in the hands of Rebecca Larson of Intervarsity Press. Rebecca is handling the layout and design elements, and hopes to finish around the first of the year. After that are several weeks of proofreading, and then off to the printer!

We'll have plenty of copies of the new *Survival Guide* to hand out to inmates in the spring and summer at Stateville Prison in Joliet. That means we'll be arranging several opportunities for volunteers to go behind bars and help with book distribution and praying with inmates.

Our Discipleship Coordinator, Mike Willis, has been working through the process of becoming credentialed as a volunteer chaplain at Stateville Prison, and he and Pastor Fred will alternate leading volunteer teams in the new year. Once we finally have the book in hand, we'll be locking in dates to go to Stateville and will be putting out sign-up sheets for volunteers. This is an amazing way to share the good news of Jesus and to grow your own faith, so consider signing up in the new year!

But going behind bars isn't the only way you can make a difference. We'll also be looking for people who would be willing to answer some of the mail that we're anticipating from inmates who read the *Survival Guide*. If you think that God might be nudging you to become involved in this way, please speak to Pastor Fred or Mike. They'd be happy to help mentor you in this new ministry.



Reimagine Worship Will Be Back in January!

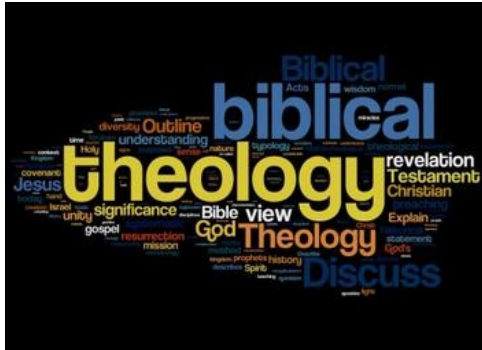
With Christmas right around the corner there will be no Reimagine Worship during the month of December and instead it will return in January. Please stay tuned for a date and details about the service.

Last month we had the pleasure of welcoming Ami Moss from Jesus People USA, and our theme for the evening revolved around "heaven." Individuals that attended discussed what the Bible tells us about heaven compared to our preconceived notions, and how for some of us, the idea of eternity may seem daunting.

If you'd like to help out in any way, please see Dan Quest.

Focus on
WORSHIP

20 Big Questions and Counting...



We've just passed the halfway point in our 20-week message series, "20 BIG Questions." The idea was to deliberately challenge and stretch ourselves to "love the Lord with all our minds" by tackling some fundamental theological questions as a community.

Each week in worship we've tried to reinforce the connections between these questions by engaging in something we call "Previously on 20 BIG Questions." If you attend regularly, you may find yourself thinking, "Okay, I get it already!" If so, congratulations. That's exactly what we're hoping for – a deep sense of the connectedness of the Christian faith. At the same time, we're also hoping to set a framework for all the new people who are joining us midstream, part-way into this long series.

When we launched this series, we were also hoping that people would be engaging each other in conversation about the questions raised each week. We're happy that a couple of new "connection groups" are already using the Sunday message and accompanying questions as the basis for their small group discussions.

In order to make that possible, we're now uploading both the Sunday message and small group discussion questions to the Redeemer website by the following Monday evening. To check them out each week, simply go to our website (redeemer-changinglives.com) and click on the "message gallery" under the Look and Listen menu (or [click here](#)).

Join the Christmas Celebration!

At Redeemer, we begin the celebration of Jesus' birth with the Children's Christmas Program on Sunday, December 18. We will all worship together at 10:30 a.m., with fellowship time to follow. This is not to be missed as the children share the story and lead the congregation in welcoming and worshipping our newborn king.

- **Children's Christmas Program, Sunday, Dec. 18, at 10:30 a.m., with fellowship time following**

Christmas Eve offers two opportunities to worship together. An earlier service, at 4:00 p.m., is ideal for families with younger children as well as for adults who head off afterward to spend time with family elsewhere. This service is led by the Encounter Band. The 10:00 p.m. service is more traditional in style, with organ and vocal choir. Both services include Holy Communion.

We will not have a Christmas Day worship service. You're encouraged to visit another congregation on Christmas Day.

- **Christmas Eve Family Worship, Saturday, Dec. 24, at 4:00 p.m.**
- **Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship, Saturday, Dec. 24, at 10:00 p.m.**
- **Christmas Day: no worship service at Redeemer**



Christmas Party is Fun for Everyone

This year's Redeemer Christmas Party is set for Friday, December 9, beginning at 7:00 p.m. This party has everything you could ask for: games and crafts for kids, carol-singing, delicious treats, an espresso bar, and a movie to wind things down before we all go home to a restful night's sleep. We'll welcome families of Angel Tree kids (see article on p. 10) and catch up with friends new and old. This is a great time to invite friends to join you, too.

If you can pitch in to help make this party great, here are some tasks where some help is needed:

- If you can help with **set up and/or clean up**, please get in touch Pastor Carol, carol.breimeier@gmail.com.
- If you can help by **bringing snacks or taking a turn with the espresso machine**, please get in touch with Dan Quest, chance00@sbcglobal.net.
- If you would like to help with **greeting and distributing gifts to Angel Tree Children**, please get in touch with Karen Palandri, redemeroffice@comcast.net.
- If you would like to help **organize crafts and/or games**, please get in touch with Mike Willis, michael.c.willis@gmail.com.

Focus on *FELLOWSHIP*



Deck the Halls...Then Undeck the Halls

Please plan to stay (or return) after Encounter worship on Sunday, December 4, to help decorate the sanctuary for the Christmas season. Help is needed with everything from setting out figures in the Nativity scene to climbing a ladder to hang greens and bows above the windows. Decorating usually takes about an hour, beginning at 12:15. Lunch is provided (pizza!).

And – while it seems way too soon to mention it – it all has to come back down and get stored away again. We'll do that on Sunday, January 8, again after Encounter worship, and, again, with lunch provided.

As we see every year: Many hands make for quick work. And it's fun, too!

Calendar of Events

Friday, December 9	Redeemer Christmas Party, 7:00 p.m.
Sunday, December 11	Family Matters Potluck at the Murtaghs', 3:00 p.m.
Sunday, December 18	Children's Christmas Program, combined service at 10:30 a.m.
Tuesday, January 3	Tuesday Evening Women's Group Resumes, 7:00 p.m.
Sunday, January 8	Church De-decorating, 12:15 p.m.
Thursday, January 12	Thursday Evening Women's Group Resumes, 7:30 p.m.
Friday, February 17- Sunday, February 19	The Foundation Youth Retreat to Lutherdale
Saturday, April 21- Sunday, April 22	20/30's Retreat, stay tuned for details!





Family Matters Holiday Fellowship

The Murtagh family is once again graciously opening up their home on December 11 to host a Family Matters Appetizer and Dessert Potluck and Open House. The party will be held from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. at 6916 N. Oriole in Chicago.

While the adults enjoy some holiday fellowship, the church babysitters will be there to hang out with the kids while they make Christmas crafts, watch a movie, play games, and eat pizza.

Please bring an appetizer or dessert to share. Also, please pass this information along to anyone else who might be interested in the event. All parents and children are welcome!

For more information, please contact Jeanne or Tom at tom_jeanne@msn.com. They hope to see you there!

Focus on DISCIPLESHIP



Sunday School is Living Inside Out

Redeemer's Sunday School children have covered four of the five attitude-changing lessons from their Living Inside Out Extreme Makeover curriculum over the past few months. We hope you've noticed!

The attitudes addressed include:

- Being thankful to God for good things (whining/gratitude)
- Being humble before God (pride/humility)
- Serving others (selfishness/servanthood)
- Trusting God (fear/trust).

The children put into practice the lesson about serving others Thanksgiving week when they spent the hour creating colorful placemats, candy gift bags, and other Turkey-themed decorations, which were used by Redeemer's Shelter Ministry team Sunday, November 27, when they served the evening meal at the Rest Women's Shelter in Uptown.

We will pick up with this curriculum in the new year, January 8, when we learn about accepting what God gives us (addressing worry/contentment) and will move on to Living Inside Out: Vertical Edge, when we will discuss our attitudes (and parents' attitudes) toward work and school.

-Karen Burkum



Is It Really Christmas?

Under the direction of Jose and Shannon Gonzales, our Sunday School children are currently rehearsing their songs and lines for Redeemer's annual Children's Christmas Program, "Is it Really Christmas?," which features children as trees and angels and includes some audience participation. The children perform at the combined 10:30 a.m. service Sunday, December 18.

Heartfelt thanks to the many volunteers who are donating time and talent for pulling this together: Mark Nielsen, Vanessa Ramirez, and Beth Christenson, who are sharing directing duties with Jose and Shannon; Kathie Rich and Jenna Huffman, our musical directors; Vanessa Ramirez and Laurie Dobosz, costumes; and Tracy Sommerfeldt, props; and, of course, to the more than 30 children who are working hard to make this year's production very meaningful for all!

-Karen Burkum

New Sunday Adult Classes Begin in January

Two new Sunday morning adult classes begin in January, with topics that seem appropriate to the fresh start we all look for at the beginning of a new year.

Genesis: This class is for anyone who's interested in taking a closer look at the first book of the Bible, the beginning of the story of God's relationship with humankind. It will also give you a strong start if you're thinking that 2012 is the year you'll read through the Bible from start to finish.

Freed-up Finances: Discover tools and develop life-long skills that will help you control your finances, before they end up controlling you. This is a video and discussion class that includes work that you do at home in your own workbook. If you're ready to examine your management of financial resources in light of your Christian faith, this class will help you get started. A copy of the workbook is on display in the coffee bar area in the church entryway for you to preview. We will be asking for registration for this class in advance so that we can get enough books for everyone.

Both of these classes meet at 10:00 each Sunday. For more information, please get in touch with Pastor Carol (carol.breimeier@gmail.com or 847-692-7120).



Learn, Grow, Connect with Other Women

Women, this is for you! As we begin the new year, there will be two opportunities for connecting with other women as we grow in faith and knowledge.

The Thursday Evening Women's Group meets every Thursday at 7:30 p.m. at church, beginning January 12. This group will be starting with Bible study and discussion based on the message from the previous Sunday's worship (audio recording available on-line for those who missed it).

The Tuesday Evening Women's Bible Study meets from 7:00-8:30 p.m. on the first and third Tuesdays of each month, gathering in women's homes. This group will resume on Tuesday, January 3. We'll announce the location in advance.

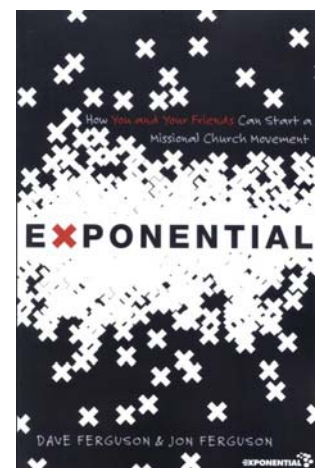
All women are welcome to join either group. For more information about the weekly Thursday group, please email Gerri Huffman at gmhuffman@sbcglobal.net. For more information about the Tuesday evening group, please email Pastor Carol at carol.breimeier@gmail.com.

Reproducing Leadership

The Launch Team for the new site has been talking about it, and Pastor Fred writes about it elsewhere in this newsletter: reproducing leadership. The idea of reproducing leadership is that anyone who exercises any kind of leadership at any level keeps an eye open for someone with the gifts and interests to come alongside as an apprentice...and, eventually, to take over leadership of that ministry or start a new one like it.

If you have a head for math, you'll see immediately that this apprentice approach has the potential to result in an exponential increase in the number of leaders over time. And that means an exponential increase in the overall amount of ministry we can do together. But the point isn't just to do more. It's also to see and encourage passions and potential in others and open up opportunities for each individual to follow God's call to the fullest.

A book we're using is *Exponential: How You and Your Friends Can Start a Missional Church Movement* by Dave Ferguson and Jon Ferguson. They are brothers who, with a couple of friends, started Community Christian Church in Naperville – the first of what has expanded to more than a dozen churches in the Chicago area.



Youth Group Plans Retreat up North



The YMNetwork's next youth event will be a retreat to the Lutherdale Ministries Center in Elkhorn, Wisconsin, **Friday, February 17, through Sunday, February 19.** The retreat is open to middle school- and high school-age youth, and the cost is \$110. **Please let Mike know if your child will be attending by December 15 as we need to send in a deposit that day.**

The theme for the retreat will be focused on The Jesus Creed which can be found in Mark 12:29-31:

"The most important commandment," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

For more information or to RSVP to the event, please contact Mike Willis at 773-484-8187 or Michael.C.Willis@gmail.com.



All 20 and 30 Somethings: Save the Date!

Save the date! We are planning our 20/30's retreat for the weekend of April 21 and 22. The retreat will focus on relationship-building and relaxation. More information on the retreat is soon to come!

For more information, please contact Mike Willis at 773-484-8187 or Michael.C.Willis@gmail.com.

Focus on **SERVICE**

Angel Tree Returns: Make a Difference to a Child

Redeemer Church is once again partnering with Prison Fellowship Ministries with their Angel Tree program. We'll buy presents for more than 60 kids this year, with a message from their incarcerated parent.

We've also invited all the "angels" and their families to share the holiday spirit at our annual Angel Tree/Christmas party on December 9. It's easy to participate – just pick up a name and give the gift of love and hope to a child.

