Our Vision 2020 Greater Things Mission Campaign is off to a roaring start. With an initial goal of $550,000, we are (as of the middle of June) already at $628,000 in pledges – and there are still plenty of people we haven’t heard from yet! Vision 2020 itself is about the greater things God might do in and through us – both at Redeemer and beyond Redeemer – in the next five years. Think of the Greater Things mission campaign as us putting needed financial fuel in the tank to help see our vision become reality.

The money we’re raising is dedicated to three key goals: (1) building a new accessible restroom to enhance our building’s hospitality in Park Ridge, (2) supporting staff and operating expenses in Chicago as that site continues to grow in numbers and giving, and (3) launching a new location in Portage Park.

So what does it mean that we’ve already blown past our original target goal? It means that we have some healthy margin in the event that some of us move away or are otherwise unable to fulfill our pledge. It means that we can not only achieve our three dedicated goals, but do them even better. It means that we’re serious about and committed to our shared vision. It means that there are a lot of generous and sacrificial givers at Redeemer. And it means that there’s still time and need for you to make a pledge if you haven’t already done so. Commitment cards are available from the church office, or go online to make your pledge. Simply go to www.redeemer-changinglives.com/greater-things and enter the password: greaterthings.

We’re just getting started, but greater things are already in the works. For example, we’re currently receiving competitive bids from general contractors to build our new accessible restroom in Park Ridge later this summer. Details to follow soon.

~ Greater Things Follow Up Team

Congregational Meeting Held Earlier this Month

Redeemer’s yearly all-congregation business meeting was held Saturday, June 4 at our Park Ridge site. At the meeting, we adopted a budget for the upcoming fiscal year, elected Nadia Geigler and Tom Murtagh and reelected Evan Price to the Vision & Strategy Team, and elected Dan Glowen as treasurer. The pastors also gave a review of our congregational life in the past year and a look ahead.
TCI Survey Follow-up Planned for Summer

Following up on the results from the Transforming Church Index survey that we did at the end of last year, we are holding listening sessions for people who responded to the Park Ridge version of the survey. The next listening session will be Sunday, June 26 at 10:00am and the topic will be “Meeting needs of families.”

While we scored fairly high in all areas (except our building), this area was a little lower than the other non-building areas. The purpose of the listening opportunities is to find out why people scored the statements in this area that way they did. So… if you have any interest in how Redeemer “meets the needs of families,” please come and share you thoughts! We’ll meet in Meeting Room 1 at 10:00am, between services. Childcare will be provided. The sessions will be identical, so you can choose one or the other.

If you have questions, or if you are unable to attend, please get in touch with Pastor Carol in person or via email (carol@redeemerparkridge.com). And stay tuned for follow-up conversations to be held at Redeemer Chicago.

Synod Assembly:
A Gathering of Chicagoland Churches

The annual Assembly of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (MCS-ELCA) happened June 10-11 in Tinley Park.

Representing Redeemer at this year’s assembly was Rita Vera, Rachel Quest, Pastor Matt, and Pastor Fred. Ben Blobaum was also there, staffing a table for our Inside-Out Connections ministry and presenting a workshop on prison ministry with Pastor Fred.

Similar to our annual congregational meeting, the Synod Assembly voted on the budget and elected people to offices and committees. There were also resolutions to be considered and speeches and Bible studies to listen to, as well as worship opportunities and workshops on various topics.

Transitions

Ashton Higgins, son of Brian and Katie Higgins, was baptized in Park Ridge on May 1.

Tony Capicchioni and Jodi Slattery were married in Park Ridge on May 7.

The following people became members of Redeemer at Redeemer Chicago on May 8: Eliza Campos; Adrienne Cleveland; Deitre and Asaiyah Crockett; Melissa Dailey; Kofi Darkwa; Christina du Breuil; Paul, Nadia, Aubrey, and Fiona Geigler; Nelida Hamer; Cecilia Herrera; Jeronna Hopkins; Dave, Katie, and Eli Hulse; LeVar Mitchell; Bob and Marnie Rourke; Kathryn Schoedel; Rebekah Schoedel; and Wyvonnia Walker.

Caitlin Christenson, Ella Nichols, and Claire Pearson celebrated their first communion on June 5 in Park Ridge.
Prison Ministry Update: Making Connections

The principle aim of our ex-offender ministry is to facilitate connections that bring hope and help to individuals who have experienced incarceration. Since April 2015, more than 5,000 current and former inmates have received a copy of our re-entry directory, “RED Chicago,” which guides individuals through the transition from prison to home. Nearly all 5,000+ copies were printed by local congregations that responded to our invitation to collaborate.

Additionally, the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) has found tremendous value in “RED Chicago.” Coupled with our *Spiritual Survival Guide for Prison and Beyond*, we’ve earned a statewide reputation for developing high-quality resources for prisoners. As a result, we’ve been invited to participate in an ongoing think-tank consisting of IDOC staff and other key re-entry stakeholders throughout the state.

IDOC is connecting with the church, churches are connecting with each other, and prisoners are connecting with the church. Praise God!

*Interested in learning more about our prison and ex-offender ministry? Contact Ben Blobaum at 224-392-1834 or ben@underthedoor.org.*

Lutheran Church Planters Network Up and Running!

An important part of Vision 2020 is imagining the greater things God will be doing through us *beyond* Redeemer in the next five years. One of the key ways we’re hoping to make those things happen is through the Lutheran Church Planters Network – something we’ve pioneered that has gained the enthusiastic support of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod and the ELCA Churchwide Offices.

Here’s a quick rundown of some of the things we’ve been able to accomplish in the past few months:

- Developed a new website: [www.lutheranchurchplanters.net](http://www.lutheranchurchplanters.net)
- Met with 15 Directors of Evangelical Mission at the ELCA headquarters
- Attended the national Exponential Church Planting Conference and held a gathering of Lutherans from across the country who were at the conference
- Established new relationships with Wartburg Seminary, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, and Luther Seminary in the Twin Cities
- Scheduled a trip to Metro Washington DC Synod to share our experience with becoming a multisite congregation and to consult with ten pastors who are contemplating (or actively planning) a move to multisite
- Spoke to several interested candidates for a one-year church planting residency at our Portage Park location
- Pulled together a strong training team and developed a draft curriculum for our summer church planters boot camp, to be held July 18-22 at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago
Portage Park Update

In May, we held a number of special events around Portage Park as part of our efforts to share God’s love with the neighborhood of our third campus.

Over Faith in Action weekend, a team of volunteers worked at Slingshots Teen Center, painting walls, staining bunk beds, and sorting clothes. Slingshots has been a great partner in our first few months of ministry, providing opportunities to serve and support local teens. Our team’s work on May 14 was a way to enhance Slingshots’ ability to serve these kids and their families. We are looking forward to finding additional ways to partner with Slingshots in the future.

As part of Redeemer’s Faith in Action weekend we also partnered with Friends of Dunning-Read and a couple of other organizations to sponsor a volunteer day at the Dunning-Read Conservation Area. This event helped to connect people in the area with this new and little-known spot right down the road.

Finally, we put on an open mic night on May 21 at Fannie’s Cafe, inviting people to share their gifts and their fellowship with each other in a fun, relaxed, and supportive environment. We had a great turnout, and I think a good time was had by nearly everyone. We’ll be doing another open mic on Friday, June 17, from 7-9 p.m. I encourage you to make it out for that whether you made it in May or not!

In addition to these larger events, we continued our quiet work of building relationships in the neighborhood, finding ways to support the ongoing work of the National Veterans Art Museum, Heartland Alliance, Slingshots Teen Center, the Portage Park Neighborhood Association, Hands to Help Ministries, and the Fundraising and Service Committee of Jefferson Park Forward.

In the coming months, here are some things you might consider doing:

- volunteer at Slingshots Teen Center (i.e., hanging out with teens)
- come to a trivia night, poetry slam, or open mic night Thursdays at 7 p.m. at Fannie’s Café
- come to the Redeemer-hosted open mic at Fannie’s on June 17
- invite a friend to come along with you to a book discussion on *Boundaries* Wednesdays at 7 p.m. from June 8 to July 13

We will continue to get better at finding ways to involve the people of Redeemer in this work. Planting a new tree is – as with everything we do -- something that can only be done faithfully if we do it together. I’m grateful to be doing this with you! As always, please don’t hesitate to be in touch (peter@redeemerportagepark.org).

~Peter Schwich
Summer Message Series

When you're not away on vacation, be sure to make each summer week complete by coming and worshipping with your sisters and brothers in Christ here at Redeemer. As we often do, we've set a message series for much of the summer that allows people at each site to hear various voices.

True Love: Words of Love in 1 Corinthians 13 (May 29-June 19)
Beginning May 29, we’ll launch into a series based on 1 Corinthians 13, the “love chapter.” In familiar words often read at weddings, St. Paul writes about the qualities of real love, love that’s God-pleasing and solidly grounded.

Wisdom From The Tradition (June 26-August 7)
We'll spend seven weeks surveying seven famous people in the Christian tradition. Drawing from saints, theologians, practitioners, scholars, and poets, this series will explore the riches that these wise individuals have to offer us as we seek to follow Jesus.

Now at a Microphone in Park Ridge

At the beginning of June, our Park Ridge worship leader, Connor Gibson, took a break from his studies at North Park University and headed west to do a summer music internship at a church in Kansas. He will be back in Chicago and leading worship on Sunday, August 14.

In Connor’s absence, worship leader Joe Ho agreed to join us as our regular worship leader. We’re excited for Connor to be able to take advantage of this opportunity to do his internship, and pumped to have Joe step up to the mic and to be part of our community in this way. As a way of getting to know each other, we asked Joe to say a little bit about himself.

Greetings fellow adventurers!

My name is Joseph Ho and I am excited to worship Jesus with you at Redeemer! Jesus is awesome! Go Cubs! I'm currently a music teacher at two music schools in Wheaton and Gurnee. My main instrument is the violin, which I have been playing since I was five. On the side, I work as a studio musician, recording for the Chicago Recording Company. For fun, I am the electric guitarist and violinist for a band called Leo Kidd and we tour around Chicago! My hobbies are learning to play different instruments, recording music, playing volleyball, basketball, videogames (Starcraft, Hearthstone), and praying! Woot woot! Can't wait to see you at church!

Praise God!

~Joe
Graduating Seniors!

We have officially wrapped up weekly youth group for the summer. We spent the second semester in Park Ridge and had some really meaningful and interesting discussions about loving those we disagree with, why the Old Testament matters, and how God is working in our lives every day.

With the year winding down we unfortunately have to say goodbye to six of our seniors who have participated in Youth Group over the past few years: Eddie Brown, Lizzie Deike, Charles Hamer, Eric Johnson, Cashmear Marshall, and Ethan Ortega are all graduating! If you see them, congratulate them on their accomplishments and wish them well before they head off on their next adventure!

However, just because it is the summer does not mean Youth Group is totally on hiatus. In addition to some of our youth participating in Leadership Lab at Augustana College in July, we’re planning a few summer events to keep everyone connected and to welcome new 6th graders. Stay tuned for upcoming details.

Looking for Youth Group Input

If you’re in 6th through 12th grade, you can expect to hear from me over the summer. If you’re the parent of a 6th through 12th grader, you can expect to hear from me over the summer, too!

I am hoping to connect with as many parents and students as possible to have a conversation regarding how we can best meet the needs and foster the spiritual growth of the youth at Redeemer. Redeemer is committed to assisting parents in developing the spiritual understanding and discipleship of their children, and an effective youth group is a vital part of our ability to do so.

If you see me walking past you and I do not stop to talk to you, please stop me!

~Dan Quest

Cave Quest: VBS at Redeemer Chicago

This summer, children and leaders are invited to experience Cave Quest Vacation Bible School: “Following Jesus, the light of the world.” Each day, children will learn a Bible story and a key verse that tells about Jesus generosity to us – that he gives us hope, courage, direction, love, and power. We will reinforce those lessons through games, songs, science experiments, themed snacks, service opportunities, small-group conversations, and more.

VBS is for kids in Grades K-5, and runs August 1-5 from 9am-noon at Redeemer Chicago. Online registration will begin Sunday, June 5.

As always, leaders and helpers are what make VBS a success. We could use help during the week, as well as setting up on Sunday, July 31. If you’d like to assist, or if you just want to know more, please contact one of the VBS directors: Rachel Quest (rachel@redeemerchicago.com) and Sara Trivedi (setrivedi@gmail.com).

To All of Our Sunday School Leaders!

Many thanks to all of the Sunday school leaders who invested their time and energy to help kids know and follow Jesus: Mike Anzalotti, Beth Christenson, Jose Gonzales, Shannon Gonzales, Kim Nichols, Dan Quest, Rachel Quest, Kathie Rich, Kathryn Schoedel, Sara Trivedi, Kristie Welke, Matt Welke, and Chandi Wittenberger.
Turbo-Charged Connection Group Training

During April and May, a group of potential connection group leaders met to discuss the book *Walking the Small Group Tightrope* and talk through issues that arise in small groups.

We had lively discussions and shared valuable insights from our own experiences. The turbo group approach provides a way for people to prepare for leadership even if they aren’t in a position to be an apprentice to a current connection group leader.

This latest training will increase our capacity to form groups for people who are looking for the deeper community small groups provide and the spiritual growth that can flourish in that kind of community.

~Pastor Carol

Chicago Bandits Softball (maybe *this* is our year!)

Come out on Sunday afternoon, June 19, to see the league champion [Chicago Bandits](#) take on the Akron Racers in a 3:05 game at the Bandits’ home park in Rosemont. Enjoy women's professional fastpitch softball and (God willing) sunshine, along with the company of Redeemer friends old and new.

Tickets are only $7.25 (no ticket needed for lap-size children). The stadium is easy to get to, and parking is free. Bring a friend or bring your family to celebrate Father’s Day!

Sign up on the sheet in the back of the sanctuary at either Chicago or Park Ridge if you’d like to go. Put your payment in a clearly marked envelope in the offering plate, send it to the church office, or hand it to Pastor Carol at the game.

Please direct any questions to Pastor Carol at carol@redeemerparkridge.com.

It’s gonna be great this year! See you there!!

Calendar of Events

*(Note: Chicago or Park Ridge location shows where an event is held, but everyone is welcome anywhere and all the time!)*

June 17  
Open Mic Night at Fannie’s Cafe, 7:00pm

June 18  
FIA: Stateville Prison Ministry

June 19  
Chicago Bandits Softball Game, 3:05pm, Rosemont

June 24-26  
20/30s Retreat at LaSalle Manor

June 26  
TCI Survey Follow-up Listening Session, 10:00am, Park Ridge

July 5  
Senior Luncheon, 11:00am, Park Ridge

July 18-22  
LCPN Boot Camp

July 24-30  
Leadership Lab, Augustana College

August 1-5  
Vacation Bible School, Chicago

August 2  
Senior Luncheon, 11:00am, Park Ridge
20/30s Retreat: Making Space for God

Sometimes we just need to stop. Stop doing and rest. While we can certainly take intentional time for rest in our day-to-day context, I’ve always found that to take a break for prayer, contemplation, and real rest, I need to get away. This is the rationale behind taking a retreat – to get out of our day-to-day context in order to reflect and recharge alongside friends in a supportive community.

I’m looking forward to how God will speak to us and how we’ll feel more connected to each other at this year’s 20/30s retreat. It’s coming up soon – June 25-26 (with the option of arriving early for some additional R&R, on Friday, June 24). Just like last year, we’ll go to LaSalle Manor Retreat Center in Plano, Illinois, a beautiful venue surrounded by nature, and equipped with canoes, trails, a swimming pool, and a prayer labyrinth. I expect this retreat to be a time for building friendships, enriching our awareness of our own spiritual growth while helping others to do the same, and deepening our relationship with Jesus.

Our theme is “Making Space for God.” We will look at what fills our schedule and explore some practical steps for stopping and spending essential, but often overlooked, time with God.

The cost of the retreat, which is significantly supplemented with fund from our 20/30s budget, is $70 for a Saturday-Sunday stay and $120 for a Friday-Sunday stay. This includes meals as well as a single, private room. There’s plenty of space for privacy and solitude as well as spaces for fellowship and community.

Registration is available in the back of the sanctuary at each site. If you have questions or would like to help out, please talk with Rachel Quest (rachel@redeemercchicago.com) or Jade Kurokawa (jkkurokawa@gmail.com).

~Rachel Quest

Change of Date: Women’s Retreat

The dates for the Women’s Retreat have changed. The retreat will be Friday and Saturday, October 7-8, with the option of staying over to Sunday, October 9. We’ll again gather at the Portiuncula Center for Prayer in Frankfort, Illinois. Carol Schickel will lead the retreat again.

Focus on Service

FMSC Mobile Pack

On Saturday, April 16, Redeemer Chicago joined dozens of local churches and other organizations to go all-in as a community on ending world hunger. We gathered at Concordia University in River Forest to pack nutritious meals to send to other communities around the world.

Our goal was to pack 100,000 meals, and, through our collective efforts, we were able to pack 108,000 meals to bless communities in need. Redeemer also contributed $500 to this community-wide initiative.

The day was a wonderful opportunity to share Christ’s love in a meaningful, tangible way and also to build relationships with our neighbors in the Oak Park-River Forest community. The response was so great that the planning team is already reaching out to churches to organize another mobile pack for 2017.
Sack Lunch Ministry

Hello everyone! My name is Melissa Dailey, and I am starting up Homeless Ministry at Redeemer Chicago. In May, we completed a Sack Lunch Run, in which we made and passed out lunches for our homeless neighbors. We met a few great people and we were able to share the Gospel with them. I plan on running a few more of these starting in the Fall.

I would love for you to join me at Redeemer Chicago. I also plan on volunteering at soup kitchens and planning other fun events. If you would like more information on this ministry, please email me at mcdailey3@gmail.com.

Faith in Action 8 in Photos

Over the weekend of May 14 and 15, nearly 200 hundred Redeemer members, regular attenders, and friends gathered together as part of seventeen different ministry teams to make a difference in the lives of others. We quilted, threw a party, painted walls and a fence, led a worship service at a nursing home, helped with a garage sale, helped build a house, distributed food, prepared and served meals, cleaned up prairie land, and much more.