



the
GATHERING
newsletter of the Church of the Redeemer

advent 2017



Where is God Calling Us Next?

David +

Something which continues to amaze me as the father of a young child is how quickly children evolve and grow in the early years of life. Watching Rory grow from a helpless infant who couldn't do anything for himself, to a crawling baby who began to explore, to a tottering toddler always looking for mischief, to a little boy with a growing vocabulary and a propensity for saying no has been nothing short of astonishing. As overwhelmed parents with busy lives, I think it can be easy for us to lose sight of how much truly changes and develops in those early years of life.

*"As you know, we
dealt with each
one of you like
a father with his
children, urging and
encouraging you and
pleading that you
should lead a life
worthy of God, who
calls you into his own
kingdom and glory."*

– 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12

But, the more I consider this reality happening before my eyes the more I have come to see that, although more rapidly evident in our early years, this is actually always true in life. The defiant teenager who becomes the ambitious twenty-something who becomes the nurturing parent, or the forty-something CEO who becomes the tender grandfather who becomes the restless retiree. Change and transformation are a constant in our lives.

However, the growth and change we experience are not without their influencing variables or their mitigating factors. Over the last four years, I have seen what it means for the development of a child to know safety, security and love. I have seen how language is learned, how behaviour must be taught, and how priorities are evident by how you live them, not by how you set them.

It is easy to think that how we develop and change is simply a game of chance, rolling the dice and hoping for the best, but the truth is that intentionality and purpose have great consequences.

In serving a new church that has seen a vast change and development during the last thirty years, I think it is incredibly important to reflect on how this as our reality as well. Again and again, we as a community have found ourselves on different occasions forging new paths with new priorities and emerging plans for the future. As we enter into this next chapter together, we will once again enter into an intentional time of discernment. We will seek to learn about who God is leading us to become and what God has in store for us next.

I believe at our very centre, we are a community committed to Christian formation (discipleship) as a lifelong task, we seek to serve the needs of our neighbourhood, and we have declared that the worship of God is at the very core of everything we do and who we are. Much has changed and developed



during the last generation, but not unlike the growing toddler or the maturing adolescent or the ambitious adult, we too need to renew our intentional commitment to who God has called us to be.

Just as I have come to recognize, as the father of a young child, how language is learned, how behaviour is taught, and how priorities are evident by how my son experiences them, not by how his mother and I set them—I believe much of this is true for us as members of the Body of Christ as well.

As we approach the launch of visioning forums and strategic planning, I am again (as I encourage you to do) evaluating my priorities, both where we spend our time, and where we spend our money. Whether we realize it moment-by-moment, the simple and complex

decisions we make each day say much about who we are, and even more about what we believe. The decisions I make as a father to Rory and as husband to Heather certainly shape the family to which I belong. Just like the decisions you and I make as members of our church shape the community to which we belong.

There are plenty of opportunities to renew our commitment—to nurture the life of our growing parish—whether it is participating in ongoing discipleship, serving through outreach opportunities, financially supporting our life and ministry, or deepening our engagement in the worship of God. So, in this next season, I invite you into an active, engaged process, taking some time to consider what God is doing to shape our common life, leading us deeper into the Kingdom of God. ✝

Strategic Planning Visioning Forums

Wednesday,
November 29
at 6PM

Saturday,
December 9
at 10AM

Sunday,
January 13
at 1PM

Halloween in the Church School



A Tradition Continues

Heather Bennett

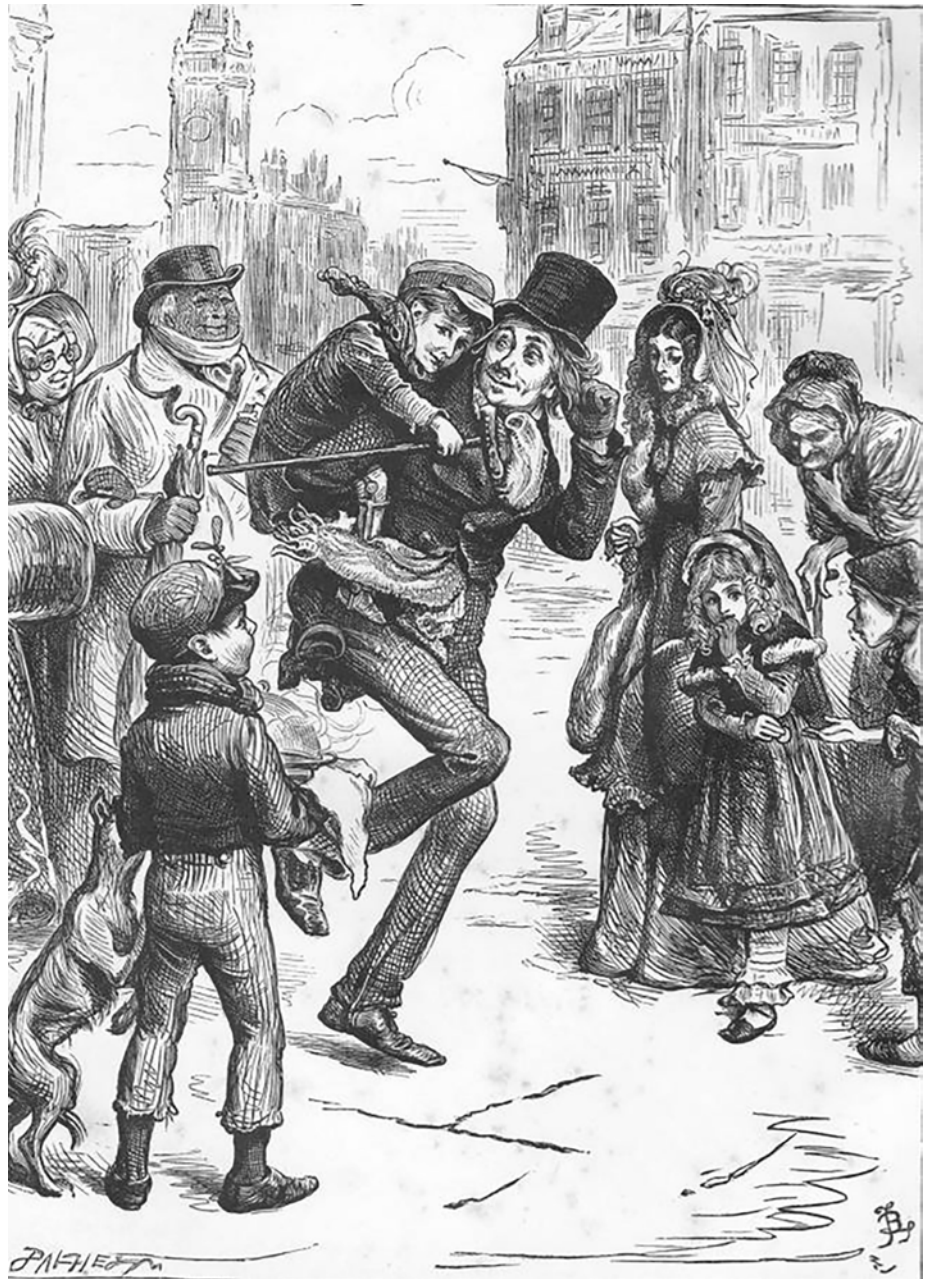
On December 10 at 2.30PM, the 14th annual reading of *A Christmas Carol* will take place in the worship space. This has become a beloved tradition for the parish and the wider Bloor-Yorkville community. This year's readers include: **Dr. Duke Redbird**, Anishnaabe elder, poet and journalist; **Kristyn Wong-Tam**, our Ward 27 Councillor; **Kathryn Brownlie**, AVP Promotions & Marketing for the ROM; **Ins Choi**, writer and producer of *Kim's Convenience*; and **Seán Cullen**, multi-talented and award-winning performer who is returning for his fourth appearance.

Why do we do the dramatic reading of *A Christmas Carol*? For two major ones: First, it is a way of inviting friends and family of Redeemer parishioners, as well as the members of Bloor-Yorkville community, to come together to share in hearing Dickens' timeless story that still resonates — "it is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices."

Importantly, the reading is a major fundraiser for the parish's drop-in program. *A Christmas Carol* gives us the opportunity to make known the work that is done by a cadre of generous and dedicated volunteers and staff who, day after day, week after week, month after month:

- ◆ Prepare a hot breakfast and lunch daily from scratch
- ◆ Offer health care services
- ◆ Make counselling, housing and legal support available
- ◆ Offer participation in an art studio and a story club

The drop-in program is funded primarily through the parish outreach budget, but we engage a number of partners including Daily Bread, Second Harvest, and businesses from the neighbourhood. Volunteers from the parish, businesses, the University of Toronto, and from local service organizations, contribute their time and energy. We



are immensely grateful for all of these partners and upwards of 200 volunteers!

Your ticket purchase goes entirely to fund the program. In addition, *A Christmas Carol* attendees may sponsor some aspect of the program through the Angel Tree. Becoming an Angel involves funding the purchase of much needed socks, health centre and art studio supplies, as well as books for the story club.

Tickets for *A Christmas Carol* may be purchased after the 9.30 and 11.15AM services, as well as through the Redeemer website. If you are unable to attend the reading but want to contribute to support the program, donations can be made through Canada Helps or on the Redeemer website under How We Serve→ Your Support. Please indicate that the donation is for the "Drop-in Program" in the message box.

We hope to see you December 10! *God bless us all, every one.*



Ask and ye shall Receive

Peter Bennett

Over the past year and a bit, we introduced you to the Septimus Jones Society, named after Redeemer's first rector. This society is easy to join—just indicate your intention to remember the parish in your will or by some other form of planned gift, testamentary (at death) or intervivos (while living). As we enter the Advent season, I wanted to share some stories of generosity that speak to some of the themes I see expressed in Advent.

Most of us are familiar with the stories of Elizabeth and Zechariah, John the Baptist, Mary and Joseph, the Angel Gabriel. They make for great

drama. What runs through these stories is fear, uncertainty, faith, and vision. The characters are not from central casting. They are pretty ordinary folks. However, each played a pivotal role in the unfolding of the story. Each experienced a 'why me Lord?' questioning of their role in the drama. In the end each was seized by a vision of possibility in the midst of uncertainty.

Here are the stories behind some extraordinary acts of generosity in the past year. (names have been changed to respect the privacy of the generous!) The nature of a planned gift or bequest is truly visionary. When we give of our time, talent or treasure to an annual budget or a capital campaign, we have an idea of how our gift will be used for ministry. When the gift is through a planned gift or bequest, we have no idea of the nature of God's ministry at the corner in 10, 15 or 20 years. All we know is that God's purpose will be revealed to a future generation of the faithful. That's what makes our planned gift or bequest so visionary.

John had been a long-time member of the parish. After he could no longer stay in his home, we were approached by his power of attorney, who now had fiduciary responsibility for managing the proceeds from the sale of the home. He wanted advice on how to have the end of life conversations with John. I gave the PA some questions to put to John in hopes of motivating him to action. Over the course of six weeks, John and I met many times (always in the presence of a third person) and eventually his wishes became clear to him. We sent the instructions to his lawyer, so he could draft the will that reflected John's wishes. Redeemer was very much his emotional and spiritual home and family, but he also recognized the wider context of the church of

which he was a member. His new will provided for long time friends, but also named the parish, Primates' World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF), and another Anglican social advocacy organization as beneficiaries. We worked in partnership with the pastoral staff to update his funeral instructions, again to reflect the close attachment he had to Redeemer. After the will was signed, I asked John if he was happy with the result. The smile on his face said it all. About three months later, John died peacefully, in the presence of long-time friends, having earlier received the Eucharist and anointing from the clergy. The will is in the process of being probated, but eventually the gifts to the three Anglican organizations will come.

Mary grew up in small town Ontario, marrying her high school sweetheart. His job had him crisscrossing the country, the family often having to move on very short notice. With every move, Mary's criteria for a home was proximity to an Anglican church as a place to build community. When her husband relocated for the last time, they were pillars of the parish, and generous donors of time, talent, and treasure. After her husband's death, the shares he received when an insurance company demutualized were passed to her. She inherited a substantial unrealized capital gain. When she met with her planner, he looked at her donations, reviewed her financial independence, and suggested she reduce her PAR and other periodic donations, in favour of an annual gift of shares. This would improve her monthly cash flow, and eliminate the capital gain on the shares. It took about a year to reorganize her affairs, but by donating shares, her giving has become more tax efficient, increasing her annual giving by about 20-percent. Mary has also reduced her tax liability when she dies. The church won't receive as much from the will when she dies, but the intervivos gifts are a boon to the parish and PWRDF.

Redeemer's history is full of stories of faith and vision, of taking bold steps in faith, not fear. Membership in the Septimus Jones Society is a demonstration of thanksgiving for blessings received. It carries on a tradition of generosity. It is truly a visionary gift. It's an expression of your faith in the long-term vision of ministry at the corner. Membership is open to all, and we welcome your questions about how you can plan your gift in faith and thanksgiving. ✝

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through a planned
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A TASTE OF Change

On Wednesday about 50 of us gathered to share food, hear stories, and raise money for the Drop-in program. Chef Justin LaFlamme treated us to wonderful food reflecting some of the favourite places of our "Special Host" Bishop Kevin Robertson: New York, India, Israel, and of course, Toronto. Then we heard stories of redemption from former Drop-in clients, while enjoying each other's company. Congratulations to Angie Hocking and Lyn Sibley for such a delightful event. ✝





BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

PART 1

Paul Pynkoski

What theologies are expressed in Redeemer's stained glass windows? What visions do they present to us as we reflect on where God is calling us as a community? How might we respond?

Look to the front of our sanctuary and you see a beautiful stained glass rendering of Jesus on the Emmaus Road with two disciples. Placed over the altar, it makes very clear the

connection between the story of Christ recognized in the breaking of bread and the Eucharist.

To the left and the right of the Emmaus window, there are scenes recalling events from the gospels: Jesus receiving children, a hungry person being fed, another clothed, and another visited in prison. They evoke for me the strong sense of our call to works of mercy and compassion, our vocation to walk with those who are pushed to the margins and forgotten.

Now turn towards the windows on the western arm of our sanctuary. We see an entirely different message: a soldier, rifle in one hand and the British flag in the other; another soldier lies at the foot of the cross; Jesus appears behind a soldier assisting a wounded comrade. These scenes depict a vision of a national God, one that merges the divine with our country, our government, and our wars.

I find it impossible to reconcile the theology of our western windows with the theology of our chancel windows.

Does the One who invites us to mercy towards our enemies call us to war?

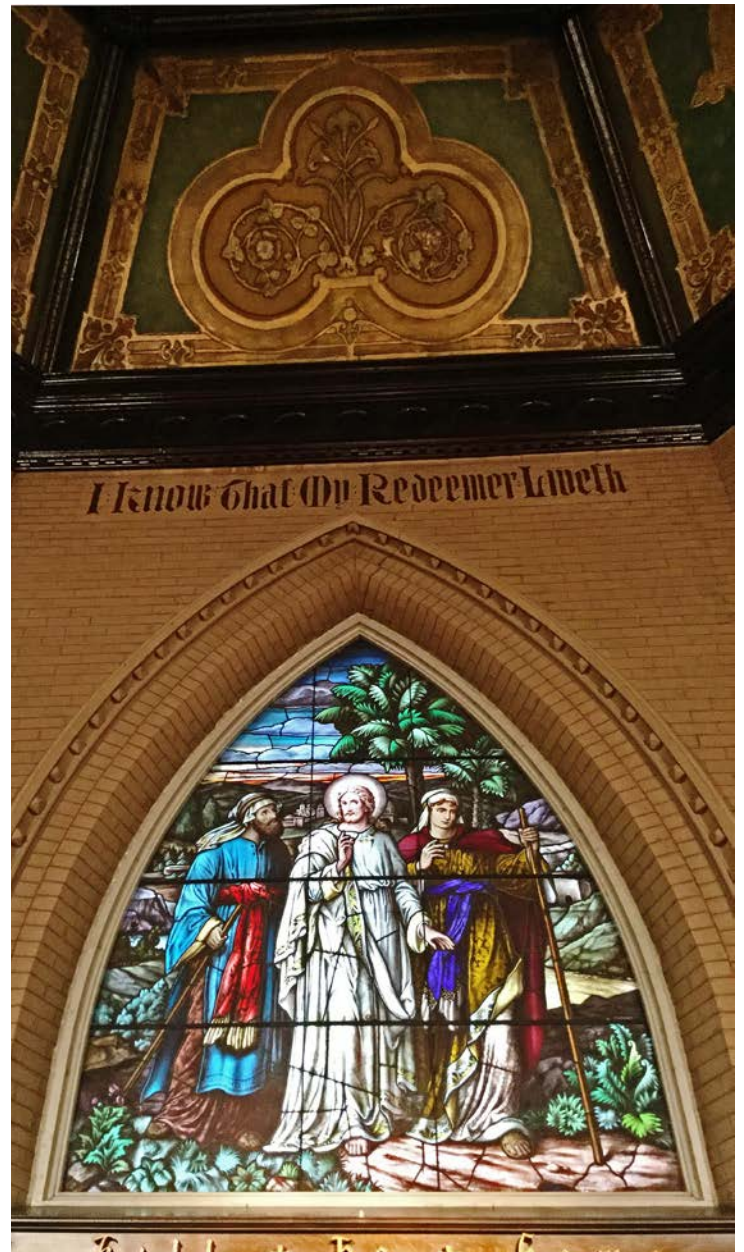
When Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un trade threats of nuclear war, what have we to say? Do we await the inevitable and hope it does not strike too close to home, hope that the wind is favourable when radioactive dust rises from the ashes of Guam or North Korea? When Canada refuses to sign the United Nations treaty on nuclear disarmament, do we just shrug our shoulders and turn our heads? Are nuclear deterrence, violence, and destruction to be construed as acts of love and compassion towards those “enemies” made, like us, in the image of God?

Christ’s call to peace and loving community is a call to mercy. But is this mercy limited only to responding to the

violence and oppression of poverty, racism, and exploitation of the earth? If the call to peace does not include our resistance to the violence of war and its destruction of God’s image in humanity, then our response is incomplete.

An incarnational vision informed Martin Luther King’s nonviolent resistance. Similarly, Thomas Merton’s contemplative and incarnational vision motivated a generation of Catholic peace protestors. Despite fierce opposition from both church and state, those protestors were willing to act on the radical truth of God’s call in Christ, choosing time in jail over the security of silence.

Perhaps we need to heed the theology and spiritual praxis of our Catholic and Evangelical sisters and brothers if we are to hear more clearly God’s call to a broader, integrated vision. ✚





Advent Wreaths:

What's the History Behind the Tradition?

Megan Jull

Sometimes we assume that all church traditions are ancient. But some of the customs and traditions we've come to enjoy are relatively new. This is the case with the Advent wreath.

Advent wreaths feel ancient. And that's because ancient peoples also favoured the symbols of the circle and light. And many cultures in the northern hemisphere, including Britain, Norway, Denmark, and Sweden used evergreen wreaths in December, to symbolize the hope for spring, new life, and renewal. The evergreen boughs were one of the few symbols of life in the harsh and dark winter months.

Some credit a German Lutheran minister, Johann Hinrich Wichern as the inventor of the Advent wreath or *Adventskranz*. He was a pastor at a children's mission school in Hamburg. And every day, the children pestered him, asking, "is it Christmas yet?" In response, he took a large cart wheel, and 24 red candles and 4 white candles. Each large white candle represented the Sundays in Advent, and each small red candle represented a weekday in Advent. Candles were lit daily to mark the progression through Advent towards Christmas.

Modern Advent wreaths were simplified to what you might recognize now; four candles representing the Sundays in Advent

and then a centre, Christ candle, lit at Christmas. You may have also seen Advent wreaths with purple and rose, or blue candles, in a desire to connect the candles to the liturgical colours used in churches.

Advent wreaths were brought to North America in the 1930s by Lutheran German immigrants. Initially, they were exclusively used for devotions in the home. They've only been a part of worship and liturgy in church for 40 or 50 years.

Redeemer's Advent wreath is a little different. Instead of a small ring of candles, we use four pillars in the quadrants of our chancel space. We pull in the Paschal candle that we light anew each Easter and use it for the Christ Candle. Each week, we process the candles into the worship space and add greenery to the pillar stand. We use large scale candles; big, generous symbols that point to a loving, gracious God who wishes that we might have life and have it abundantly.

You and your family might wish to introduce an Advent wreath in your own home. All you need is four small candles, a little greenery, and a larger centre candle. The candle colours really don't matter. Use your wreath as a centerpiece on your dining table. Pair the lighting of the candles with scripture readings or personal prayers. Use it as a conversation piece when you host guests; it's a way to talk about your faith and share it with others. It's an opportunity for prayer, meditation, and respite from the commercial side of the season. In a culture gone mad at Christmas, it's an opportunity to pull the light of Christ into our homes.



Preparation for the Coming of the King

Roshni Jayawardena

The first Sunday of Advent is marked as the beginning of the new year in the church's calendar. What comes to mind when you hear the words "new year"? For me, and many others, it is probably something along the lines of "New year? New me!" With the first day of January as the secular new year not only do we get cold days, snowstorms and slippery sidewalks, but coming along for the ride are our new goals for the year and our good intentions. My personal favorite and one that makes its way back to me every 12 months...a new healthy lifestyle. This is a time where, in the midst of these cold days, people are making the most out of their new year and new start. It is the time for action.

Conversely, the first Sunday in Advent is commonly regarded as the beginning of a season of expectant waiting, patience and contemplation. This start to the new year for the church begins with what I would consider a calmer time of preparation for the coming of the King. It is during this time we are invited to reflect on our history, as Christ came into the world as an infant, and wait until the celebration of the Christmas season where we proclaim his nativity story.

It is this dichotomy of doing and waiting that often challenges me. As I began my student placement at Redeemer in September, I knew that I was given 120 hours in four months to learn as much as I could from the community. I also knew this was not a lot of time. I have been welcomed

so warmly by so many of you, and am very grateful for the learning opportunities Redeemer has provided me including chances to be included in your focuses on outreach, education, and liturgy. Although, during my time here, I struggled to feel like more than a student observer. I didn't want to spend my time observing how things were done. I wanted to participate in them, be entrenched in the culture that is Redeemer, and be a source of action and energy. I wanted to come across like a Jack (or Jill) of all trades, and felt that in order to learn I needed only to do.

I am now in the last month of my placement and can say quite confidently that my time at Redeemer has taught me more about ministry, leadership, and myself than I could have ever imagined. This experience has helped form and prepare me for whatever may lie ahead. Once I was able to get over my own ego and focusing on action, which took a few conversations with my supervisor, I was able to begin the harder process of expectant waiting, patience and contemplation on what was happening around me in this vibrant parish. I began to truly hear about and witness transformations that were taking place within the community and for individuals who bravely shared their story with me.

Advent is a version of the Latin word meaning "coming." My time at Redeemer has taught me that it is important to prepare for what is coming and what may come during my life. Preparation not only through action, but through watching, reflecting, and witnessing Christ's presence and his message that is unfolding around us every day. In Advent, we prepare for the coming of the King, I thank you all for showing me how his coming has and continues to shape your community. ✝

MARKING THE DAYS OF ADVENT AT REDEEMER

There are a number of ways that you can mark the days of Advent at Redeemer.

This year we will be part of **#AdventWord**—a global advent calendar. Each year the Anglican Communion offers the opportunity to receive a daily AdventWord meditation and respond with an image on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. You can go adventword.org to sign up for the daily reflections. Our daily prayer reflections

are using the themes for **#AdventWord** for inspiration and for our daily social media posts. Each Sunday morning the daily prayer booklets will be available in church and on the website.

We open the church on select weeknights for about 90 minutes at the end of the workday for **Advent Chapel**. Dates and times will be posted on the bulletin board and on social media. In the quiet of candle-lit space you are invited to take time to pause from the rush of Christmas preparation and be still. If you are in the area and see the lanterns on the front steps—please drop in and find a moment of peace. ✝

Redeemer's Youth Reach Out

Tristan Paylor, Youth Ministry Apprentice

The youth group has had an eventful start this year, and there's plenty more in store as we look forward to the holiday season.

As part of our ongoing effort to understand urban poverty (and what God wants us to do about it), we embarked on our first outreach project of the year in partnership with the youth groups at St. Clement's, St. Paul's Bloor Street and Little Trinity. Together we organized a street patrol downtown, handing out juice and sandwiches to people who wanted a meal along different routes between St. Paul's and Allen Gardens, finally reassembling at St. Paul's for discussion and worship. It was a deeply meaningful experience for all involved.


One youth group member and two leaders were in attendance at the diocese's annual Outreach and Advocacy conference. The theme this year was Being God's People: Embracing Difference, Building Solidarity. We attended various workshops where we examined privilege, learned about barriers to housing, heard stories of friendship between communities of different faiths, confronted racism and heard from other young people in the diocese about the work they're doing for a better world and a more welcoming, inclusive church. Social justice and outreach are close to the heart of our youth group, so it was a wonderful opportunity to participate in the conference.

There has been a lot of interest in making separate programming for junior and senior youth, and with a team of two youth leaders we've had the resources to make that a reality this year. The current programming is working very well, with the junior and senior youth rotating between



meeting for worship and meeting in the loft, while one Sunday every month brings both groups together in the loft for games and discussion.

We're looking forward to the youth group's annual tradition of baking cookies that will be sent out as pastoral gifts close to Christmas. In early December, the group will gather to share a meal, enjoy each other's company, and bake a multitude of delicious cookies. It's a lovely way to spend time together and serve the community!

If you would like to get involved in the youth group (or if you know a young person who would), please feel free to contact Alexandra McIntosh: amcintosh@theredeemer.ca. 



A REACH GRANT TO HELP US REACH OUT

Alexandra McIntosh

Some exciting news for the Church of the Redeemer! We have just received a *Reach* grant from the Diocese of Toronto to help launch a ministry for young adults. *Reach* grants are one time grants created to help churches with initiatives that

are designed to reach out and connect with people in new and innovative ways.

Over the past few months we have been forming and discerning what young adults' ministry needs to look like for our parish, and this grant will help us to start implementing our plans. In January, we will begin gathering once a month for a meal and discussion after worshipping at the 11.15AM service. We will also continue to deepen our involvement and relationship with our evening services by forming community

ALL SAINTS RELEASE DAY



Wednesday, November 1 we welcomed children from St Mary Magdalene, St Anne's, Church of the Messiah, and St Martin-in-the-Fields to join our children for a day of learning about the saints. From creating puppets to reflect the story of a saint of their choice to making muffins for the drop-in program's breakfast and Christmas cards for the Redeemer gift packages, the children discovered a little about the saints of the church and how they can be saint-like toward others.





individuals and groups whose human rights are being violated.

Each year in December, Amnesty holds worldwide letter-writing events, Write for Rights, where millions of letters are written. Last year's cases included Site C Dam in British Columbia, where construction continues despite opposition and threats to the environment and traditional way of life. The case is again included in the 2017 Write for Rights. The 2016 cases included writing to the government of Australia in support of refugees in dreadful circumstances on the islands of Manus and Nauru off the shore of Papua New Guinea. This situation has, unfortunately, not improved and has been in the news recently. A third case featured Annie Alfred, an albino girl in Malawi. Albino people in Malawi risk being hunted and killed for their body parts. Some progress was made in this case, as the Malawian government has since created a handbook to help with investigations into these horrific offences. Amnesty's success record is reportedly one in three, as these examples reflect. One in three is a good batting average. Progress can be slow, but there is progress. We are buoyed up by hope.

Susanna Jacob

Gregory Baum wrote a powerful piece, 25 years ago, called "The Meaning of Hope in Evil Times." It concludes with these words: being socially engaged, buoyed up by the gift of hope, means to build networks of resistance, create communities of friendship and service, and promote a counter-culture of social solidarity.

At Redeemer, we are socially engaged in many communities of friendship and service, working toward our vision of the (counter-cultural) kingdom of God. One of these communities is the Amnesty (International) Action Circle, meeting each month to write letters in support of

The cases for 2017 Write for Rights include bringing to justice the murderers of two LGBTIQ activists in Bangladesh, support for the threatened Lenca Indigenous people defending their territory and rights in Honduras, and calling for charges to be dropped against two men peacefully protesting Israel's occupation of the Palestinian Territories.

Redeemer's Amnesty Action Circle, in Gregory Baum's words, "buoyed up by the gift of hope...(is a community) of friendship and service, (promoting) a counter-culture of social solidarity," and working for the kingdom of God. Join us, any time from 10.15-11.45 the third Sunday of each month, except August and December. ✝

TALKING TO ONE ANOTHER

Growing Understanding Between Christians and Muslims

Karen Turner

There are various factions in our society that would have us believe that Muslims are a threat, that they hate us, or that they are terrorists. We've all heard the hateful, bigoted, rhetoric. But we also recognize a growing counter-movement that consistently resists the hateful bigotry, through the written word, social media and protest. We at Redeemer would align ourselves with this resistance, and some of us have joined in those protests. In taking a stand against this dangerous rhetoric, we are committing ourselves anew to following Jesus and loving our Muslim neighbours.

So, in addition to signing petitions and marching in protests, what are some other concrete and visible ways that we as a parish can live out this core Christian principle of neighbour love?

Learning@Redeemer is suggesting we start by learning all we can about Muslim people, from Muslim people! We can take the opportunity to learn about the faith of Islam and

Islam Series Working Group

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various Muslim worldviews. We'll deepen our understanding that Muslims are not a homogeneous group that thinks and believes the same things, but that, like Christianity, Islam is made up of many groups, taking in many cultures and languages, with varying interpretations of their common faith and their holy scriptures. We'll explore head-on some thorny issues widely misunderstood by non-Muslims, such as Sharia, women's dress and the meaning of jihad.

Starting in January, Learning@Redeemer will introduce an extraordinary six-part learning series, "Talking to One Another: Growing Understanding Between Christians and Muslims." The presenters are all knowledgeable and committed Muslims, who are committed to inter-faith dialogue. They've all agreed to speak honestly about what they think non-Muslims need to know about Islam, and are eager to help us understand.

The dates and topics are below. Put these important Sunday afternoons in your calendar and join us. Invite your friends, Christian, Muslim or anyone else. Since we will be hosting many guests in our space, if you can volunteer with welcoming and hospitality, please let us know. ✝

DATE - 2018	SESSION	PRESENTER
January 7	Origins of Islam, the Quran, and Hadith Literature	Abdul Hai Patel
February 18	Sunnism and Shi'ism: Origins and Manifestations of Islamic Sects	Husein Khimjee
March 11	Sharia and Muslim worship practices	Liyakat Takim
April 8	Women in the Muslim World	Shyrose Jaffer Dhalla
May 13	Islam in North America- what does it mean to live faithfully in a secular state?	Riffaat Mamdani
June 10	Islamic Fundamentalist Movements and Jihad	Liyakat Takim



The Rev'd Canon John Hill (presbyter in the Anglican Diocese of Toronto), Rabbi Michael Stroh (rabbi emeritus of Temple Har Zion) and Dr. Liyakat Takim (Sharjah chair in Global Islam, McMaster University), for a panel discussion on Sunday, October 15. They helped us to understand how each tradition responds to the question 'In the current struggle for the soul of humanity, is religion an asset or an obstacle?' and, from that, what we have in common. This event lays the foundation for our upcoming series on Islam.

2017

A Busy Year for the Redeemer Refugee Settlement Committee

Alison Colvin

Through the generosity of the parish, the Redeemer refugee settlement committee continues the vital work of settling newcomers to Canada. In April 2016, the committee welcomed Ibrahim, a young man from Gambia. He has now joined his family in Ottawa. That same year, a Karen (Myanmar) family of six arrived in Toronto from a Thai refugee camp where they had lived for over ten years.

The first month of any settlement is a whirlwind of registrations (health cards, Ontario ID, bank/phone/Internet accounts, school etc.) but even after that there is much to do, particularly when a family has little English and has never lived in a modern city. Everything is new whether it is a cell phone or a bathtub.

In 2017, committee members assisted Ta Kai Hae and Lah Wah's family with medical/dental/dietician appointments, tax returns, monthly budget reviews and sewing lessons. With the family's input, the committee decided that homework help was important. Volunteers arrived after school four days a week and one day on weekends to kick-start good study habits.

The children took swimming lessons while their parents enjoyed Tai Chi. Last summer, the children attended day camp. Committee members also planned excursions to High Park, the Zoo, the Rouge Park, and the wonderful social afternoon at the Church of the Redeemer.

The family has now experienced the full cycle of a Canadian year. As the committee approaches the official end of this settlement on November 23, it is gratifying to see the family speaking English, adapting to modern transportation systems and apartment living, and using technology to communicate, not just with their immediate family, but the outside world. Recently, a committee member worked over the phone with the oldest daughter, to re-connect their internet access! This would not have happened six months

ago. The family is grateful for our efforts, and it is fair to say, committee members have enjoyed every minute with this loving family.

It seems just yesterday volunteers set up the apartment on Main Street, but now it is time to hand off responsibility for the family to a settlement worker at Access Alliance. The settlement worker will continue the work of our group by helping with the family's medical, dental and financial needs. It is hard to let go, but we must, and we wish the family every blessing in the years ahead.

Guided by Anne Christy and Mary Horan's thoughtful leadership, the committee meets approximately every three weeks. The group works collaboratively to ensure the needs of newcomers are met. Over the last two years, the membership has changed, but the committee continues to recruit members within and outside the parish.

One past member of note is Lorena Azucena, a young woman who was the eight-year-old daughter of a refugee family fleeing El Salvador in 1987. Redeemer sponsored Lorena, her mother and siblings, while St. Barnabas sponsored her aunt and two daughters. Her mother and aunt were widows—their husbands were victims of El Salvador's brutal civil war. In Canada, Lorena's mother and aunt worked hard to learn English. By month three both women found jobs. One mom worked nights and the other days. In this way the children would be cared for. Eventually this blended family moved from a crowded basement apartment to a five-bedroom metro housing unit. Later both families sponsored other relatives and bought houses.

In 2016 Lorena heard of Redeemer's refugee settlement committee and attended a meeting. She wanted to give back and became an active member. She oriented Ibrahim to the city's transportation system; helped with phone and Internet setup; produced colour photos of committee members so that the newly-arrived Karen family could identify members; accompanied the Karen family to their church; brought the family birthday cards and balloons, sorted and managed clothing, and so much more. Lorena works for a publishing company, and contributed reference books for

*The family is
grateful for our
efforts, and
it is fair to say,
committee
members have
enjoyed every
minute with this
loving family.*

the committee's use. Lorena's participation reminds us of the ripple effect of caring and kindness.

So, what is next for the committee? Recently, the Anglican United Refugee Alliance (AURA) asked Redeemer to consider the sponsorship of four young Eritrean men (Saho Tribe) who have been persecuted in Eritrea and fled through the Sudan to Israel. They already have significant financial support from two men in the Toronto area. These men will arrive in 2019.

Why Redeemer? AURA believes the committee has the following expertise:

- ◆ knowledge of services in the greater Toronto area
- ◆ capacity to fundraise
- ◆ strong Interest in social justice

- ◆ experience—pragmatic—have worked with another group—skills and personalities to work with newcomers
- ◆ longevity—current members renewed their commitment to this ministry
- ◆ mix of ages and expertise
- ◆ willingness to take primary responsibility

With AURA's support, the Redeemer refugee settlement committee will recommend to Board of Management that the parish accept this sponsorship.

None of this work could happen without the generous on-going support of the parish. If you are interested in becoming a member of the committee, please contact our co-chairs Anne Christy or Mary Horan. ✝

Making Disciples

It was wonderful to welcome Bishop William Cliff back to Redeemer on Saturday, October 28 for an evening of conversation about what being a disciple is and how we transform the baggage the language of discipleship has gained to an invitation to deepen our relationship with Jesus. Bishop William was the preacher at the Sunday morning services. We look forward to a return visit from him when he is next in Toronto.



Travel for Learning

Manitoulin Adventure

Carolynn Bett



In early September, nine adventurers journeyed to Manitoulin Island as part of the Indigenous Solidarity Working Group *Travel of Learning* programming in partnership with Trinity St Paul's United Church.

On our first day, Sunday, we joined the congregation of St John the Evangelist in Kagawong for their 9AM worship service. We learned about the history of the church—a Mariners' church decorated with the relics of a shipwreck—and about Indigenous relations in the community. In the afternoon, we spent by the Bridal Veil Falls, wandering through the woods to the bay and enjoying a special Canada 150 Pearson exhibit in the Old Mill Heritage Centre.

Monday was spent with our tour guide, Mitch, discovering the area of Wikwemikong. A history enthusiast, Mitch told us about the history of the land being un-ceded territory through a failed treaty signing. He also took us to the oldest Roman Catholic Church in northern Ontario, Holy Cross Jesuit Mission, and to the ruined residence that had been part of the on-reserve school. He seemed eager that we learn the whole history in detail. After this we toured St. Paul's Manitowaning—the oldest church on Manitoulin—built entirely by First Nations people.

Dreamers' Rock, as one of the prime sacred sites in Ontario, was a point of pilgrimage for us and we were gratified to learn that we would be permitted to climb it on Tuesday. Travelling to Little Current, the bridge north off Manitoulin is swung for 15 minutes every hour on the hour so at 11.15 we drove off toward Birch Island and the Whitefish River First Nation reserve. At the base of the Rock, our guide Sunny taught the history from the last ice age to the time of the failed treaty signing. Then, using a chart of the Peterborough

Petroglyphs, he taught us some basic meanings of several main glyphs. During our climb, he led us in meditation on the future, past, present and self and guided us in the ceremony of offering tobacco as we paused to give thanks for each stage. Teachings and stories flowed from him near the summit of the rock.

Wednesday saw us back in Manitowaning for a tour of the Debajehmujig Creative Centre. Bruce taught us a great deal about business and economy from a First Nation point of view.

Thursday became even more intense with the tour from Great Spirit Circle Trail in M'Chigeeng lasting most of the day. Steve, our guide is also Midewiwin and eager to communicate his culture. In the morning, he took us to the Roman Catholic church, which is built round like a teepee and has many Indigenous sacred items on the altar and throughout the space. The Stations of the Cross were painted by Leland Bell early in his career. Mary, a woman at the church, explained the history and items and showed us the deer skin vestments as well as fielding our questions about Indigenous/settler relations in the church. Steve then took us into the Cultural Centre into a room shaped like a teepee with a sacred fire at its centre that was not lit that day). There he did a smudging ceremony and taught us about the sacred medicines. He linked the braided sweetgrass to his own hair braid in honour of Grandmother's hair, which helped us understand why the cutting of hair in residential school was so distressing. A tour of the Cultural Centre Museum followed by lunch was next.

After lunch, Steve took us into the stockade behind the Cultural Centre and drummed, sang and told the story of the

origin of the drum. With his explanation, I came to a new appreciation of the structure of the songs. Next up was the medicine walk, which I had thought would be a stroll through the woods. However, the medicines were in gardens on the inside periphery of the stockade. As we ended our tour, we saw, in the centre of the stockade near the sacred fire pit, picnic tables laid with bannock and berries for our refreshment. The young chef came out with an exotic tea of cedar, lemon balm and strawberry. His pride in his work and hopes for his future was heart-warming.

We wrapped up the day with a potluck dinner and sacred circle dance back at the cottages where we stayed for the week. The sacred circle dancers had been gathering at the cottages for many years and in carrying on their tradition, it gave the church folks a chance to reclaim this form of worship, which had been lost to the church during the Reformation.



Friday morning was a time of relaxation, canoeing, swimming or just sitting on the deck listening to the lapping water and watching the ducks. In the afternoon we were to tour the Sheguindah museum and archaeological site. We wandered through the pioneer exhibits searching for the special gallery telling about the 9000-year-old Indigenous site.

What a thrill it was to walk up the hill in the woods where Indigenous folks had walked and lived and to hear the tales their artefacts had told Dr. Jelig, an archeologist who was delighted to share all he knew. We paused where the ancient lakeshore had been 2000 years ago, then

6000 years ago, then 9000 years ago, where stones marked an early archaeological dig.

And so ended our Manitoulin adventure, a succession of surprises, deep teaching and amazing experiences provided by welcoming residents so eager to tell their stories. ✚



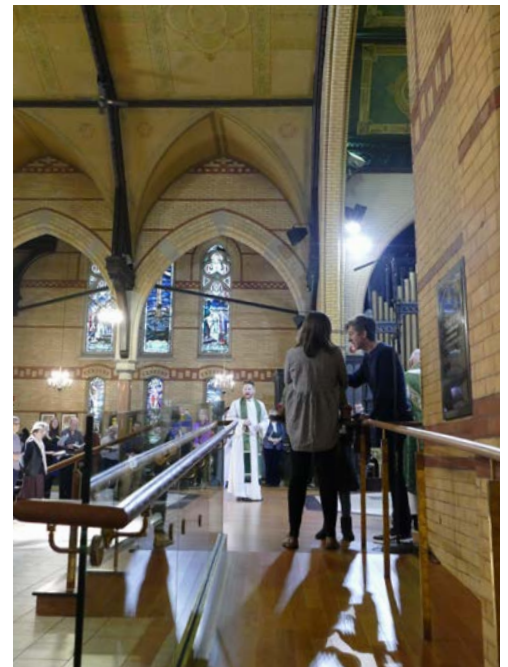
All Saints and All Souls

On Sunday, November 5 we celebrated All Saints Day in the morning, we gathered around the font to reaffirm our baptismal faith. In the evening, as we commemorated All Souls Day, we took time to remember those whom we love, and who loved us, and no longer see through the lighting of candles.





Life at Redeemer



Catechesis 2018

From just before the beginning of Lent until Easter, our catechesis program is offered. If you feel the promptings of the Spirit to explore your faith in a more intentional way, this may be the place. Details about the dates and specifics of the program will be made available in the coming weeks. Stay tuned!

Santa Claus Parade Party



SERVICES OF NOTE

THE ADVENT CYCLE

We gather in stillness and we wait for the light to break through, to grow week by week, as we await the One who is the light of the world. Each week, a candle on the Advent wreath is lit.

Sunday, December 3 – Advent 1 at 7PM: Our annual service of lessons and carols: the music and the readings explore the season of Advent.

Monday, December 4 – Blue Christmas: The Christmas season is supposed to be one of joy—and yet for some of us, we find it difficult to embrace that merriment. We grieve—the loss of a loved one, a recent separation or divorce, unemployment, being away from family and home for the holidays. The Blue Christmas service creates liturgical place for those who need healing. Join us at 6 PM

Sunday, December 10 – Advent 2 at 7PM: Candlelight, prayer, song, and stillness give form to our Taizé service. A peaceful way to end the week and prepare for the week ahead.

Sunday, December 17 – Advent 3 at 7PM: Join us for Bach Vespers. This service of word and beautiful choral music features Bach's *Unser Mund sei voll Lachens* (BWV 110).

Sunday, December 24 – Advent 4 in the morning: We gather at 8AM (Sung Eucharist), 9.30AM (Sung Eucharist with nursery care) and 11.15AM (Sung Eucharist with nursery care). Come, be with us as the fourth candle in the Advent wreath is lit.

CHRISTMAS

Sunday, December 24 – Christmas Eve:

The Pageant and Sung Eucharist at 5PM

The children and youth join in telling the age-old story of Jesus' birth so that we hear it again as though for the first time.

7.30PM Candlelight Eucharist

Come and join us for a celebration of Christmas in candlelight, song and word.

10.30PM Solemn Eucharist

Choral music, solemn procession and sung Eucharist with incense form the foundation of this worship service. After the service we continue the celebration with a time of fellowship and fine fare.

Monday, December 25 – Christmas Day: The quiet has come. We are invited to draw nearer, to welcome the Prince of Peace. Join us at 10.30AM

There is no evening service.

Sunday, December 31 – Christmas I: Services at 8, 9.30 and 11.15 AM. Please note that there will not be an evening service.

Sunday, January 7 – Solemnity of the Epiphany:

We walk the way of the Magi and we bear witness to mystical gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh being placed at the feet of the Mystery. 8AM Said Eucharist and 9.30AM Sung Eucharist with nursery care. The 11.15AM service is a Solemn Sung Eucharist with procession. Incense will be used.

Sunday, January 14 – Baptism of Christ: We draw near the water to remember our own baptismal ministry as we are called into the world to serve.

Sunday, January 21 – Rock Eucharist: At our next Rock Eucharist the music of Carole King will be woven through the liturgy. We gather at 7PM.

The on-going bible study series, **Telling the Story**, continues in 2018. Please register for one or all of the upcoming evenings through the church website or by calling the church office (416.922.4948)

Tuesday, January 9 with The Rev'd Megan Jull
The Saving Work of Jesus

Tuesday, February 27 with The Rev'd David Giffen
Jesus as the Head of the Church

Tuesday, March 20 with Christopher Jones
The Cosmic Christ

PARISH NOTES

MARRIAGE

Diane Laïla Hachem and
Lawrence Shing Yan Chung

Natalie Adrienne Selles and
John Patrick Cunningham

Amber Jo Aulen and
Luke James McRae

Lori Michelle Buckley and
Walter John Sutton

Anna Susannah Jane Hilderman and
Gerard Joseph Kennedy

*May their lives together be a sacrament
of your love in this broken world.*

IN MEMORIAM

Edward Gordon Hachborn

*Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with all
your saints, where there is neither pain nor
sorrow nor sighing, but life everlasting.*