



the
GATHERING
newsletter of the Church of the Redeemer

summer 2018



Size Typology— What Does It Mean?

Susan Graham Walker

WHAT KIND of a congregation is the Church of the Redeemer? There are lots of ways to answer this question. One that has been employed recently in a meeting of the Advisory Board and referred to in a session of Dialogue with David is something called Church Size Typology. Developed by the Alban Institute, an organization of consultants working with main line denominations in Canada and the United States, the theory describes the characteristics of congregations—parishes—based on the average Sunday attendance (ASA).

There is a short summary of the ‘types’—Family, Pastoral, Program, and Resource below. What ‘type’ of parish was Redeemer when you arrived? What is important about this theory and why are we talking about it at Redeemer?

One reason is that since the 1980s, or within living memory of some of our members, we have been at each of the stages. We have negotiated the transitions. Sometimes it has been a bit wobbly. Now we are at another transition moving

between the Program-sized parish toward the Resource-sized parish.

These transition times are critical. (Some will remember such times here at Redeemer.) Congregations find it challenging to make the changes necessary to grow in a healthy and vibrant manner. There are many reasons why this is an awkward situation. There is often an inertia, a comfort for members that often thwarts the efforts to welcome and integrate new members. There may not be the staffing support (clergy and lay roles) to ensure success; there may be a sense of loss of ‘the way things were’ (ready access to clergy, ability to initiate projects quickly ...).

Also, members may default to the ways of the community that originally attracted them. However, that same attraction brings new people! In short this means change! How does the community sustain what is most important to it and also include the new energy, ideas, gifts and skills that additional people bring?

The authors of this size typology theory observe that the congregation that doesn’t adapt its structure and leadership approach to reflect the size of congregation it wants to become has no hope of sustainability. And the congregation that has not been appropriately structured to manage its complexity will eventually stagnate or decline.

Understanding the dynamics can highlight the opportunities and risks. How can we harness the benefits and be aware and avoid the difficulties so that Redeemer continues to flourish as a beacon of faith and justice at the corner of Avenue Road and Bloor Street?

SIZE TYPOLOGY SUMMARY

Family-Sized Parish, (ASA of up to 50 members): The ministry in this sized church often revolves around one or two key families. Power and authority rests with a matriarch or patriarch individual or family. Change happens through these members. Disagreements are like family feuds. The role of the clergy is more of a chaplain for the congregation.

Pastoral-Sized Parish, (ASA between 50-150): The ministry in this sized parish is clergy centered with power and authority shared with a few other leaders. Ministry is largely developed, led, or guided by the clergy. People’s loyalty and interest in the church will largely center on their feelings about the priest. If given the choice between good preaching or pastoral visits with parishioners, this sized parish prefers

activities that build relationships. Arguments will be about the clergy.

Program-Sized Parish, (ASA between 150-350): Ministry within a parish of this size largely happens through diverse programming to suit the interests or ages of the members. The Program-sized parish depends on shared leadership; each member actively engaging and taking part in ministry. Vibrancy is intrinsically tied to the faith development of members. As members grow in their faith, the community grows and thrives. New members get incorporated through groups. While the clergy remain the spiritual head and leader of the community, there is a shift to building up lay leaders who are able to mentor others in the faith. Power and authority resides in committees. Change gets driven by lay leaders and the clergy role shifts to administration. Disagreements are over resources and priorities.

Resource- or Corporate-Sized Parish (ASA 350 or more): With increased resources—people, leaders, funds—the Resource-sized parish is complex and multi-dimensional. There are multiple staff roles and ministries (musicians, clergy with specific ministry area, lay program staff). A lot of work goes into making Sunday worship a rich experience, followed up by opportunities to serve and support mission and ministry. This sized parish is distinguished from the Program-sized parish by its complexity and diversity. Governing boards formally control the parish's life and future. Laity lead on many levels and the Resource-sized parish provides many opportunities to exercise ministry and influence. Key to the success is the multiple staff and its ability to manage the diversity of its ministries in a collegial manner. The primary role for the clergy is to put forth the vision, often through dynamic preaching, and oversee the staff who supervise the mission and ministry. ✝

ON SUNDAY, June 24 we said goodbye to the Friesen family as they moved to Hamilton. As part of their leave-taking, Michael, Mandy and their children, Lilia and Seraphine, gave us a beautiful gift to mark their time in our community with thanksgiving. Michael and Mandy became part of the community in 2006 and joined the server's guild after catechesis in 2008. Their presence as servers and their role in assisting in preparing for the Eucharist made the suggestion of a lavabo set seem so appropriate. They commissioned David Howells to craft a set for us and we are the recipient of three beautiful pottery bowls and water jugs as a result of that commission. Each has the Redeemer cross logo on it and we now have ones for special liturgical seasons (blue and gold glazing) and ordinary time (green glazing). It is wonderful to have more of David's beautiful pottery in use in the church.



In addition to the lavabo sets, they have given incense to reflect the presence of their daughters, Lilia and Seraphine, in the liturgical life of the parish and how the girls have been formed by our community. They said in their note,

The three incenses we are leaving are significant in this way. The first fragrance, Casper, recalls the first time Lilia was boat girl (during Epiphany). The second fragrance, Lily of the Valley, is for Lilia's young admiration of Mary, the mother of Jesus. And the third fragrance, Seraphim (the heavenly caretakers of God's throne who sing "Holy, holy, holy") is for Seraphine, who helps set the chancel before services.

We will miss Michael, Mandy, Lilia and Seraphine and pray that their new home will be a place of joy, hope and love. Thank you Friesens for this wonderful gift. ✝



Vocational Deacon Ministry at Redeemer

Paul Pynkoski and Carol Scovil

The Church of the Redeemer is discerning the role of an ordained deacon in our midst. And more specifically, journeying with Angie Hocking as she discerns her call to diaconal ministry. The ministry of a deacon brings the needs, concerns and hopes of the marginalized to the church, and is a living reminder of the community's call to servanthood. A deacon enables the church to be justice makers, truth tellers, advocates and reconcilers in the world.

Acts 6-8 records several stories about the Church after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. These stories depict the origins and development of the ministry of deacons.

In the first story, a conflict has emerged that has racial and economic overtones. The community had been trying to ensure the widows and poor among them are fed, but members of Greek background complained to the Jewish apostles that their widows were being neglected. The solution was to set apart seven men to oversee the distribution of food to the poor. Deacons.

One of the seven, Stephen, in addition to the distribution of food, distinguishes himself by also performing "great wonders and signs" and interpreting the history of his faith through a Christocentric perspective. Stephen is martyred, but, much like Jesus, his Lord, before he dies he cries out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them."

Another deacon, Philip, was driven out of Jerusalem, but found his way to Samaria and was involved in healing, liberation from evil spirits, and baptisms. Later, being sensitive to the Spirit's direction, he hitches a ride with an Ethiopian eunuch, someone who would be marginalized from Temple worship in Jerusalem, shares the good news about Jesus, and then baptizes the Ethiopian in response to his believing faith.

We see in these stories the shape of the ministry of deacons. Hands-on ministry with those who are marginalized, helping the faithful see the world and their experience through the lens of the Incarnation, evangelizing, healing the wounds borne by outsiders, reaching out with the Gospel to the excluded, and baptizing converts. It is a ministry that turns the Church toward the world, and helps bring the marginalized within the circle of community.

This ministry was well established early in the Church's history. Paul's letters (40-60CE) refer to deacons and the letters Ignatius of Antioch wrote to various churches while on his path to martyrdom around 107CE make specific reference to deacons, as distinct from bishops and presbyters.

Deacons continued in the Eastern church; in the West, they pretty much disappeared, becoming a short term, transitional role for candidates for priesthood. That changed in the latter half of the twentieth century, with the Episcopal and Anglican churches, drawn more into matters of social justice, opening up the possibility of permanent, community-based diaconal roles.

Angie is discerning her call to ordination as a deacon at Church of the Redeemer. Ordination would mean Angie's staff role and her voice in the larger church would grow. However, unlike Roshni, who is a transitional deacon to be ordained a priest and who will move on to other parishes, Angie will continue to work within this community and The Common Table as a deacon.

The diaconal ordination process requires that we affirm at a vestry meeting that we see, in general, the need for formal diaconal ministry in our community, and that specifically, we support Angie moving forward to being ordained in that role. Other steps—formational and contractual—follow from that. At the special vestry meeting on Sunday, August 12, motions of support for this ministry and role will be brought forward. If you have any questions, please contact Paul Pynkoski or Carol Scovil, chairs of the diaconal discernment committee.





My Discernment of the Diaconate: From Gum to Glory

Angie Hocking,

Pastoral Associate of Community
Engagement and Director of
Outreach Services

REMEMBER WHEN I was in grade two, ever the community organizer, I made posters for a competition I wanted to run on the school playground. The poster read ‘whoever can jump rope the most times wins a pack of gum! Competition is Friday!’ I used my allowance to purchase the grand prize. As the day approached, I saw a very shy classmate reading the poster. He leaned over and said to me ‘I want to try this but I am no good at jumping rope.’ I remember the feeling of my heart breaking in that moment. I hadn’t thought about my special event being exclusive. In fact, I had been shooting for the very opposite—to bring kids together! But, I had made an oversight by making this a ‘competition,’ and inadvertently made it so some would feel intimidated. The day before the event, I collected my posters to make some edits that evening at home.

Friday morning, I proudly posted each poster back up on the walls, including a new note at the bottom. It read, ‘P.S. Everyone that plays will get a piece of gum JUST FOR TRYING!’ with lots of smiley faces.

This (somewhat hilarious, in retrospect) theme continued in my life. I am not sure where I got the confidence to think I could do the things I did (I wasn’t all that popular or notable at my school) but I continued with my community organizing antics. I hosted fun fairs in my back yard where ‘Everyone is a winner!’ and all received prizes. I made my own school newspaper featuring the less notable classmates (read: not athletic or super smart). One headliner story was how Charles made his own Gak at home and let us all touch it. Riveting stuff!

I never remember a time I wasn’t trying to organize my fellow humans, and trying to find creative ways to include everyone as I did so. It wasn’t coming from any especially honourable place. It was just a draw I had deep within me. I noticed people, and tried to include them. It is simply the truest version of me.

This draw has only gotten stronger as time has continued on. I cannot help but notice the person in the alleyway sleeping, or the young woman on the bus who has an unknown man sitting uncomfortably close to her, or the person in line at McDonalds who is counting their nickels for something on the dollar menu. It is truly how my brain operates; not in any sort of noble way, but its just how I function. It’s sometimes a bit of a curse, in fact. But I have grown to accept it (I often want to just ignore it. And sometimes I do, but I can’t sleep at night when that happens).

I won’t tell the long story of my road to my vocational work in this article, but I will summarise it to say that having this ‘eye for people’ has led me to work with the poor and the marginalized in various communities, in Chicago, New York, and most notably, for 11 years here in Toronto. I feel extremely grateful to be able to do the work I do and journey alongside The Common Table community, as well as the greater Redeemer community, as we figure out together what love in action looks like at the corner of Bloor Street and Avenue Road.

It wasn’t until just a few years ago that I learned a little bit about the diaconate. I didn’t think of the role of the deacon as much beyond one of the integral roles that carries out liturgy. And in my church tradition growing up, a deacon

basically meant a board member, or a church warden. The more I learned (and for information on this, please see Paul Pynkoski and Carol Scovil's article in this newsletter explaining this in more detail) the more I was intrigued.

A vocational deacon is an ordained clergy person that is specially called to the margins, to the oppressed, the poor, the isolated, and those in need. They are called towards projecting those voices we aren't listening to. A deacon is called towards caring for the oppressed and the broken. A deacon is called to bridge-building and community integration. It sounded so familiar to what I was already doing and what I already understood as my calling. I continued to read about it, and discussed it with mentors.

In one article, a simple statement stood out to me. It read, 'A deacon is someone who is burdened with the task of noticing.' Noticing! I do that. I *can't help* but do that. (To be clear, I'm not talking about noticing say a pile of books on my desk or dishes in my sink—those things I will not notice for DAYS)... but noticing people—and especially people on the fringes—now *that* is my heart's song.

So, why do this? Why discern a call to the diaconate, when I am already doing my life's work, regardless of the deacon title? I will answer that briefly, and very practically, from my personal perspective.

Collar power and community advocating

There are so many instances where our community finds themselves stuck and frustrated in relation to 'the system.' Many a time have I accompanied a participant to an appointment where they had been treated unfairly, be it by the welfare system, the police, a landlord, or security guards, just to name a few. Although I do not feel drawn towards wearing the clerical collar any old regular day, there is no question that moments arise where the presence of a clerical collar can have a direct positive impact on our community, especially in situations of advocacy (both individual and bigger picture). And it's a transformative way to be the face of the church in a society that needs to see the church standing up for justice.

'Diaconal ministry therefore has these essential aspects: to support individuals in particularly vulnerable life situations and also to address those conditions that create vulnerability and to work to change them.' – *excerpt on the diaconate overview at lutheranworld.org*

Weaving into the diocese and clergy community

I see this point as two-fold. First, it would be such a gift to be able to glean from the clergy community and learn from the wonderful leadership in the diocese. I look forward to being challenged and inspired by the diverse team of clergy

in this city. Secondly, I look forward to bringing my own voice into this circle, and the lens that I have gained in my years of journeying alongside those experiencing extreme marginalization. I look forward to living out my calling 'from the inside'; alongside the church, and with the church, and for the church.

The vocational diaconate community

There are groups of deacons that meet locally, nationally, and globally, and to be a part of that community will be a huge support to me in my work. I also look forward to hopefully have the opportunity to bring fresh energy and ideas to the diaconate community.

Bridging 'the upstairs and the downstairs'

Since long before I started here at Redeemer six and a half years ago, parish leadership has been always talking about 'bridging the upstairs and the downstairs.' Even though we do this pretty well in many ways, we are always wanting to do it more. I think that pursuing the diaconate is a transformative step in this process of bridging our communities. This quote below from the article 'A Call of their Own: Deacons and the Church' in uscatholic.org articulates this point well:

'The mistake I see quite often here... is to confuse the deacon's mission with charity alone or even just charity and justice. That's too limiting. I refer to deacons as "ministers of connect the dots." We are supposed to show how charity and justice are a function of word and sacrament. They all fit together—they're not separate, distinct compartments.'

Continual reminder of my call and my responsibility

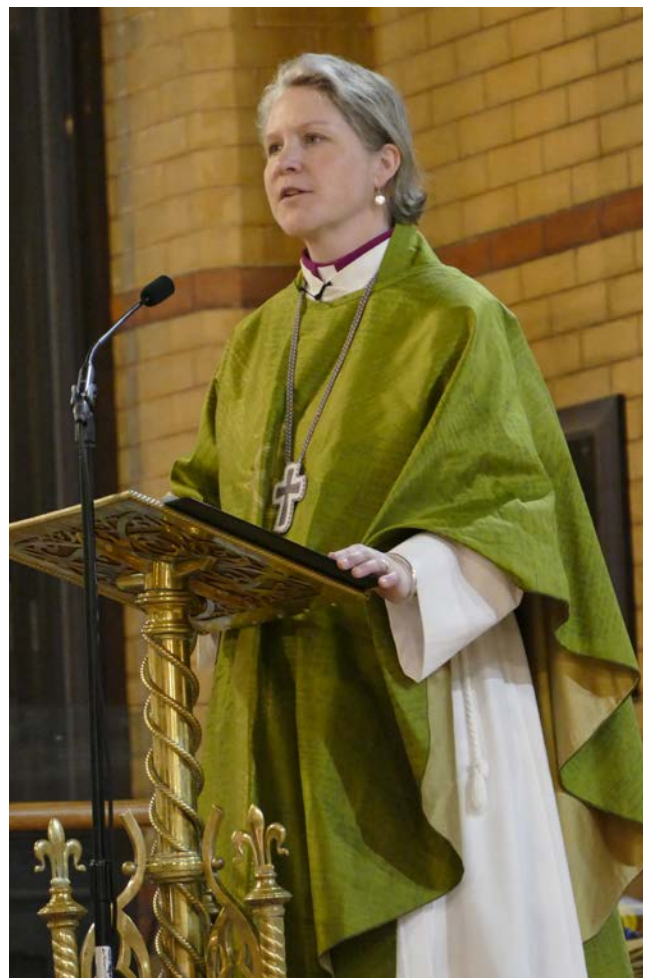
How many reminders do we need? Hundreds! Thousands! A huge part of being Christian is to proclaim and re-proclaim the gospel and love to the world... over and over again. Not only do I feel called to that role, but I need just as many reminders myself, too. A commitment to the diaconate reminds me of my purpose, over and over again. And as I participate in the role of communal reminding, I will remember that this needs to be executed continually and creatively through facilitating the Eucharist and in the liturgy, preaching, neighbourhood connecting, and student education programming.

As I continue to discern the calling to the diaconate, I request that this community joins me in prayer, in love, and in support. I am so thankful for the diaconate discernment team and for the people in my life that continue to challenge me and strengthen me. I am a better person and Christian because of Redeemer and The Common Table community. Please continue to walk with me and share with me your wisdom and love, in this journey and beyond. ✝

PRIDE SUNDAY



INDIGENOUS SUNDAY



STRATEGIC PLANNING

Where Do We Stand?

Lee Shouldice, Vice-Chair, Board of Management

The Church of the Redeemer has previously operated in accordance with a strategic plan. Our most recent strategic plan expired in 2013. We were overdue for a new one. Shortly after David was appointed as our new incumbent in March, 2017, he and the senior lay leadership of the church met for the purpose of laying the groundwork for a fresh strategic plan.

Much has happened since that initial meeting. David and the chairs and vice-chairs of the Advisory Board and Board of Management met on a number of occasions with Bill Bickle, a facilitator, to discern the underlying priorities that ought to guide the future direction of the church. Our first steps were to assess where our church currently finds itself. We identified our values, culture and identity, what we've been doing that works, what we've been doing that doesn't, where we see opportunities to grow, and what we need to be concerned about in the future.

Once that process was completed, we secured the input of the congregation. Parishioners were invited to attend one of three separate visioning forums to provide input into the strategic planning process. Approximately 75 parishioners attended at least one session and provided the senior leadership team with helpful input regarding what has been historically important to the church, what remains fundamental to how we live out our Christian faith, and how these values ought to be incorporated into the future of the community.

Once the visioning forums were completed, a more broadly-based strategic planning committee was established to ensure broader and more inclusive input. That committee is composed of 15 individuals, including a number of former board chairs, volunteers, and the Pastoral Associate for Youth and Young Adults. Further meetings were held as we moved towards the preparation of a first rough draft of a strategic plan. In addition to discussing the future of the church, we developed a vision statement that describes the essence of our community.

During the course of our meetings the committee has identified four strategic priorities to focus upon over the next three years. It is these priorities that will drive the governing, planning, and future decision-making by the senior leadership of the church.

First, it is critical that the current governance model of the church be modified. We are a church in transition, having moved from a parish that is mid-sized to one that is large. The church has not, however, properly staffed itself to support the many things that we do. Clergy, senior leaders, and a small number of super-volunteers attempt to meet the needs of parishioners and the broader community. They inevitably find themselves facing exhaustion and burnout.

The two-board model that the church has used for the last 40 years continues to work well. However, we must be properly resourced to ensure that our mission is effectively carried out. We believe that it is necessary for additional staff to be hired to ensure that sufficient support is provided to the senior leadership. We recommend that a Director of Operations be hired to carry out many of the tasks currently directed and undertaken by clergy, senior leaders and volunteers.

Engagement is another strategic priority upon which our church needs to focus. It is vital to the long-run sustainability of our community that parishioners become and remain engaged through a renewed emphasis on discipleship, liv-

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ing out the gospel message and baptismal covenant. It is the hope that parishioners will become more involved at a grassroots level with the day-to-day operation and mission of the church, including faith formation, discipleship, and fellowship. In addition, we need to direct our attention to the broader community. We must open doorways for those who consider themselves part of our community, but not in the traditional “Sunday morning” kind of way. We also need to focus upon the recruitment of lay leaders from our younger generations.

We view the need to engage in effective listening as a further strategic priority. Our clergy and senior lay leaders don’t have all the answers. They must, however, be able to discern the most important questions to ask, and learn how to actively listen to the responses of parishioners in order to ensure that the needs of the congregation are met. In this respect, it will be important over the next three years for the senior leadership of the parish to carefully and continually evaluate how best to use the resources of the Church of the Redeemer that are being devoted to ministry. Ensuring that the right questions are asked, and that the responses provided by parishioners are properly heard, will be a critical part of that process.

Last, but not least, we view a renewed focus upon Christian formation and discipleship as a strategic priority. Individuals become part of our faith community with different experiences and needs. Our programming should meet the needs of parishioners, no matter where they are located along their faith journey. We also consider it a strategic priority that our parishioners become more missional in how we live, helping others to see how God works in their lives, where they might not otherwise do so.

What’s next? In early June, 2018, a first rough draft of a strategic plan was prepared and circulated to members of the committee. It remains a work in progress. A special vestry meeting has been called for August 12. At that meeting, a brief summary of where the strategic planning process stands will be provided to parishioners in attendance. Ultimately, a draft strategic plan will be unveiled to the congregation at a parish meeting to be held this fall. Feedback from parishioners will be invited at that time. A plan to implement the priorities identified in the strategic plan will be developed shortly thereafter. The final draft of the strategic plan and that implementation plan will be presented to vestry for approval in February, 2019.

The strategic planning committee wants your input! If you have something (or something more) to say about our strategic priorities over the next three years, we’d like to hear from you. You can provide us with your comments by emailing them to webverger@theredeemer.ca. ✝

Special Vestry

There will be a special vestry meeting on **Sunday, August 12 after the 11.15 AM service.**

The three items on the agenda are:

A mid-year review of the finances with a motion to make any mid-course corrections that are necessary to the budget.
Motions in support of the discernment process for ordination to the vocational diaconate by our pastoral associate for outreach and community engagement, Angie Hocking.

For information, an update on the strategic plan for the parish.

All members of the community are welcome and encouraged to attend.



This Summer with Redeemer Kids!

Our assistant curate, Roshni Jayawardena, has been working over the summer to include more ways for our children and their families to connect with each other, to participate in the worship services and to gather for times of learning together. She offers us this run-down of some of the things that have been happening and will continue to happen as the Redeemer Kids program gets ready to launch into the next season of learning.

During summer services, Redeemer Kids have activity bags available to them during the service. These can be found at the welcome area of the church near the greeters on a colourful stand, and children are invited to take a bag into their pews to enjoy. These colourful and fun bags include items such as books, colouring and activity pages, a puzzle, toys, and a finger labyrinth. To take the best care of our new activity bags, we ask that after use children



Redeemer Kids

remove any of their own colouring pages and drawings, and return the bag to the stand ready for another child to use!

Redeemer Kids Board:

The new Redeemer Kids Board is located above the activity table! Families are invited to check this board for updates on programs, socials and to learn more about the Redeemer Kids ministry.

Redeemer Kids Summer Programs:

Rev'd Roshni will be leading Redeemer Kids programs during the 9.30AM service on Sunday July 29, Sunday August 5, and Sunday August 19. These programs are a opportunity for Redeemer Kids to gather and enjoy a time of learning and engage-



ment with their faith, and fellowship with one another. After a prayer has been said with the children at the beginning of the service, Rev'd Roshni will lead the children to the parish hall, and they will return before communion. Please ensure children are not alone in the parish hall before the program begins.

Redeemer Kids Socials:

Throughout the summer there has been and will continue to be Redeemer Kids Socials. Grub and Games Night took place on Wednesday, July 4 and brought together a variety of families and children who enjoyed games, our new nursery toys, a pizza dinner, and freezies. A picnic day on Philosopher's Walk is also planned for July 29 that will include snacks, games, bubbles and sidewalk chalk. Please keep a look out for upcoming socials in August that will be advertised for Redeemer Kids and Families.

Coming Soon for Redeemer Kids!

The Church School Welcome Back Party and registration will be on Sunday, September 9, during the 9.30AM service, and we hope to see all of our Redeemer Kids there.

This year Church School is incorporating some new and exciting programs as we intentionally lead and minister to children who are followers and learners of Jesus. Program elements in this year's Church School program include specific units that provide multiple sessions to explore single topics, learning that is focused on the lectionary and other foundational aspects of faith, guest speakers, dramatizations, and involvement in the liturgy.

This is an exciting time for Redeemer Kids as we prepare for our Church School year, and if you are interested in volunteering as a teacher, please contact Rev'd Roshni. We look forward to another great year of learning, growing and fun together! If you have any questions, please contact Rev'd Roshni at roshni@theredeemer.ca



Meet The Rev'd Roshni Jayawardena

Over the next few issues of *The Gathering* we'll be introducing you to our newest staff members. We pose two questions to them and what they do with the questions is up to them! Here we meet Roshni.

What is your role on the pastoral team at Redeemer?

In May, I started at the Church of the Redeemer as the 'Assistant Curate, Children & Family Ministry.' With this role I am learning as much as I can about ministry and life at the Church of the Redeemer as I prepare for ordination to the priesthood. Additionally, as part of the pastoral team I have a particular focus on children and family ministry, which

includes nursery care, church school, family gatherings, faith formation programs and more!

What is one thing about being part of the Redeemer pastoral team that excites you?

The pastoral team is so energetic and enthusiastic about what is yet to come, particularly for children and family ministry—it's very motivating! Leading into September, we are exploring new approaches to children's ministry and particularly focussing on engaging families. The pastoral team and parish has been so supportive of these steps as we grow and learn about what works best for this ministry.





Youth Ministry Sunday: A Sermon

Lydia

This year, on Youth Ministry Sunday, one of our graduating youth—Lydia—was the preacher at both the 9.30AM and 11.15AM services. We share her sermon here for those who didn't have a chance to hear it and for those who were present, as a reminder of the profound words of faith she had to share. You can also listen to the sermon on the church website.

In *Girl in A Band*, the memoir of Kim Gordon from the 90s grunge band Sonic Youth, Gordon says “Every woman knows what I’m talking about when I say girls grow up with a desire to please, to cede their power to other people” (page 132). When I read that line, I certainly understood what she meant and honestly, who doesn’t? Everyone can relate to or can remember that struggle with finding their identity and the frustration and anger of being who you are. In the gospel Jesus says, ‘How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.’ As Kim Gordon said, part of growing up is ceding your power to other people, and in my experience all that does is turn you into a divided kingdom, and as the gospel said, it becomes impossible to stand.

In the summer of 2017 I finally got my dream job of being a cabin counsellor at an overnight summer camp. I spent 24 hours a day seven days a week surrounded by kids, teaching them how to make pottery, how to stern a canoe and making sure they ate their veggies and applied their sunscreen. I cared so much about sunscreen application in fact that one of my campers told me I should be a weather woman since I was so passionate about sun safety. At the end of every day,

when everyone was ready for bed, we had this activity called check-in. Every night each camper would describe their day using a colour, or a song, or a flower or any other sort of metaphor. Everyone would sit on their bunks and listen, until everyone in the cabin had had a turn and it was time for bed. One night I asked a group of 10 year-olds, “if you could have a superpower what would you have?” As everyone took turns (flying and invisibility being the most popular) I reflected on what my answer would have been at that age.

Growing up I always loved the X-Men, the premise being that the comics take place in a world where some people known as “mutants” possess fantastical powers, causing them to be hated and feared by society. One of the X-Men is named Kitty Pryde, she has the ability to walk through solid objects.

In the series *Astonishing X-Men* by Joss Whedon, Kitty Pryde loses control of this power and sinks deep underground, and when I read that, suddenly I knew what power I wanted.

From the ages of 10 and up I used to fantasize about sinking into the ground, all the way in to the center of the Earth. I had a teacher in grade five and six who was infamous for her harshness and explosive temper. I would sit at my desk, or stand at the front of the class, or be taken in to the hallway to be yelled at and the whole time I would be dreaming of sinking down into the floor, and never stopping until I reached the other side, whether that be another continent or the center of the ocean. This fantasy continued all through middle school, where I never understood the math on the board and the complex intricacies of having friends exhausted me. Even in the faith lessons I had with Liska Stefko before being baptized I asked her what she thought would happen if someone went in to the center of the earth.

I wasn't baptized as a baby; I was baptized at the age of 11 here at Redeemer per my own request. I don't remember why I got this urge, or the emotion behind the decision or my feelings during the ceremony but I wish that I did.

In *Being Christian* by Rowan Williams (the 104th Archbishop of Canterbury) one line did stand out to me on page five, and I believe that it speaks to my 11-year-old experience and the decision I made, "If being baptized is being led to where Jesus is, then being baptized is being led towards the chaos and the neediness of humanity... you might expect the baptized Christian to be... somewhere in touch with the chaos of his or her own life." This line appeals to me because of the implications that Jesus is there at the chaos and neediness of humanity, he never lost control and sunk down. Instead, he chose to descend and act as a guide. Growing up is an introduction to the chaos and neediness of humanity, but growing up baptized is an opportunity to not have to face this downward journey alone.

When I was 11 years old I was growing up. I was getting taller yet somehow at the same time it felt like I was sinking. If being baptized gave me a chance to be in touch with that, to be in touch with that sinking feeling and suffering that Kitty Pryde physically experienced beyond her control and that sinking and suffering that Jesus chose to take on, then the decision to be baptized at 11, the decision to have a companion in my downward journey, suddenly makes more sense to me.

If you couldn't tell already I may as well say it, I'm an anxious person. Presenting in class makes me feel nauseous, meeting new people makes me go quiet and tense up, and I assume that everyone hates everything that I do. This feeling isn't constant though. From the first second I entered the church basement for my first Sunday school class

eight years ago up until this past year, I've always felt a safety in the Redeemer basement. Eight years ago when I went downstairs for my first Sunday school, Daniel Mark greeted me. Anyone who had the chance to meet him will understand why I suddenly felt at ease in this new environment, and every time I greet a new camper coming to camp, or

a new student coming to Sunday school I try to emulate how Daniel Mark would act. I try to give others the feeling of safety I felt in the Redeemer basement as an insecure 11 year-old.

I've also felt this safety and security far away from the Redeemer basement. I felt this safety in Yukon during the youth group trip of summer 2016, whether we were on top of a mountain looking at the sprawling landscape or beading with the elders, I was always secure.

Because it isn't the brown basement tile or the yellow basement walls that makes me feel safe, it's the people and the confidence that growing up around them has given me that has blessed me with these moments of security.

It's also the confidence that growing up in the Redeemer community has given me that allowed me to get my dream job of being a camp counsellor. Being a camp counsellor is a job that takes decisiveness and confidence, it is certainly a job that requires you to be a full kingdom instead of a divided one.

It's the confidence that growing up in the Redeemer community gave me that allowed me to sit in a cabin and ask a group of ten year-old girls, "If you could have a superpower, what would it be?"



Youth Ministry Sunday





KEEPING VIGIL

Sometimes we are left without words, numbed by events unfolding in our city and even around the world. Sometimes we need somewhere to take that sense of bewilderment and confusion; sorrow and pain.

When the news broke on Sunday, July 22 of multiple victims of a shooting on Danforth Avenue on a warm Sunday night—an event that seemed to shatter any sense of safety most of us feel—parish leadership put into motion a plan that we've had to use more often than we'd ever want: we prepared the worship space to be open for any and all who need space to come and be still, to pray, to find a moment of peace in the chaos.

The plan is simple: email is sent out to those who need to be consulted and details are finalized as we arrive at the church. Candles are set up in the chancel as a focus and a

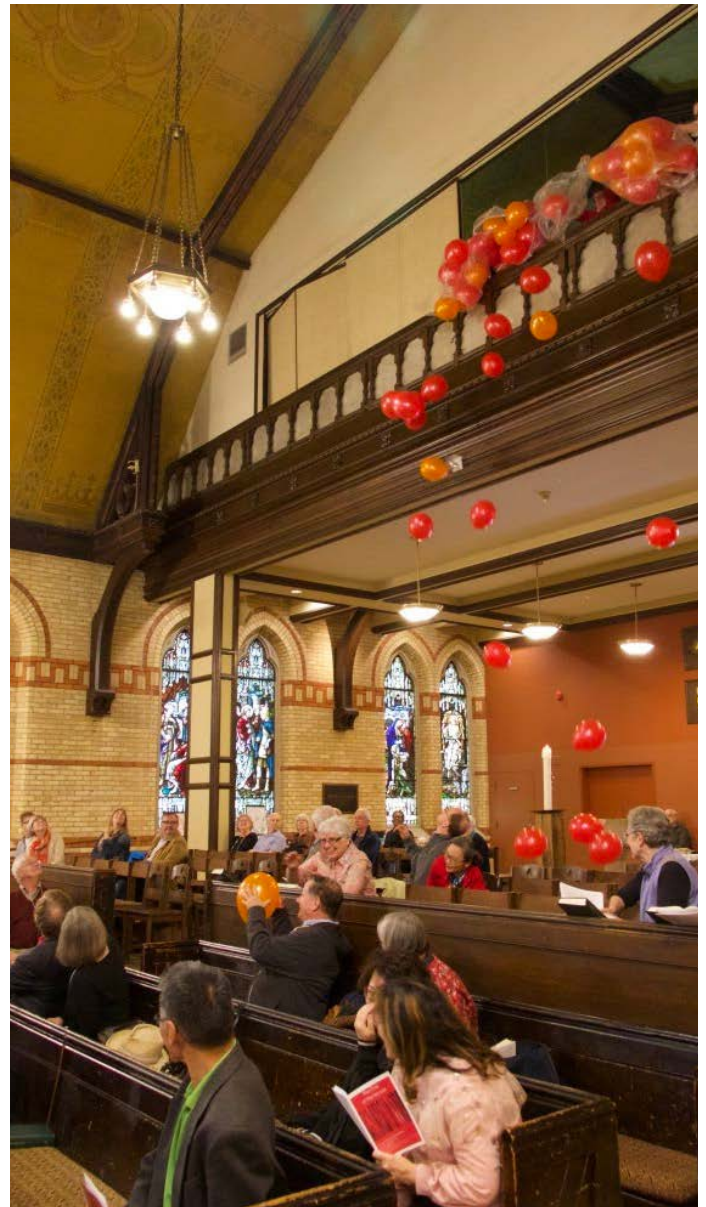
table with votive lights that those who come in can light is put out. And then, we send out word through social media, we put information outside the church and we open the doors wide. In the quiet of the space, parishioners and members of our pastoral team wait to welcome and to chat with any who enter into our space. One of the parishioners who was been part of the welcoming team on Monday, July 23, sent the following in a note of reflection on the experience that day ...*a woman and her teenage daughter came in and sat near the front. At one point, the daughter rested her head on her mother's shoulder. It was such a tender gesture and they were clearly grateful to come in to share time together around an event that makes no sense and for which there are no words.*

I trust that many had the experience of feeling they had "touch[ed] even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed."

What is happening in our city is baffling but I feel we are called to offer presence at such times.

Indeed, this is one of the ways that we can be present to the community beyond our walls—by simply being present. Thank you to those who were able to, on very short notice, give of their time to keep the church open for 10 hours. This is important ministry that we are engaged in. ✝

Pentecost





In early July, our pastoral associate for youth and young adults, Alexandra McIntosh, and two of our youth joined with the youth of St George's on the Hill and two of their leaders, for a return trip to Yukon. This is the third exchange with the youth from Mayo and deeper bonds are being forged and with that increased understanding of the issues that face young, Indigenous, people. It is an incredible experience for all of the participants—teenagers and adults alike. ✝





SEASON OF CREATION

The Creation Matters @ Redeemer group invites all in the community to join in a Season of Creation this autumn. The Season of Creation is an invitation to celebrate and give thanks for the beauty of our world—lakes and ravines, trees and parklands—and for the bounty of the harvest from backyard gardens and fields.

Through a series of worship services and community events, we will join with faith communities around the world in this celebration.

Sunday, September 23 at 7PM

Earth Song: A Service of Music, Word and Prayer with guest preacher, The Very Rev'd Dr. Bill Phipps, former Moderator, United Church of Canada

Monday, September 24, at 7PM

We ARE the Earth!

A Panel Discussion with

The Rev'd Dr. Cheri DiNovo, Minister, Trinity St. Paul's United Church, former MPP Parkdale-High Park

The Right Rev'd Mark MacDonald, National Indigenous Bishop, Anglican Church of Canada

The Very Rev'd Dr. Bill Phipps, Co-Founder and Board Member, Faith and the Common Good and former Moderator, United Church of Canada

Sunday, September 30 at 9.30AM and 11.15AM

Water for Life

Preacher: The Rev'd David I Giffen, Lead Pastor and Incumbent Priest

Sunday, September 30 at 2PM

Nature in the City

Meet at Etienne Brûlé Park parking lot and join Heather and Peter Bennett for a walk along the Humber River for the salmon run.

Sunday, October 7 at 9.30AM and 11.15AM

Celebrating Earth's Abundance (National Thanksgiving)

Preacher and Presider: The Most Rev'd Fred Hiltz, Primate, Anglican Church of Canada

Sunday, October 14 at 9.30AM and 11.15AM

Loving the Earth God Loves

Preacher: Grant Jahnke, DMin., Chair of Creation Matters @ Redeemer

Other events will be announced in the coming weeks. Watch the Sunday bulletin, eNews and the website for further information.

