



the  
**GATHERING**  
newsletter of the Church of the Redeemer

advent 2019



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# The Light Shines in the Darkness:

## Carrying a Torch for Advent

**A**S THE days get shorter and the nights longer, the natural rhythms of our lives become accustomed to spending much of our waking life in darkness. For those who work full-time or go to school, for example, we make our journey to and from our destinations either in the half-light of pre-dawn, or the failing light of dusk; darkness becomes second nature to us. Advent, the season which begins our Christian year (as opposed to our calendar year,) imitates the cycle of the natural world. It is the season in which we are called to, first, have an awareness that many of our journeys begin in darkness.

Just as in the beginning—when “darkness covered the face of the deep”—so too the beginning of Advent finds us in darkness. For many of us the leaden monotony of chill weather and gray skies leaves us forlorn, hungering for light to dispel the shadows cast upon our hearts. In the silence of our prayers, those of us who are most affected by the darkness, cry out to God for light. More specifically, we wonder what the incarnation means for us. The soul asks itself: what difference does it make to me and to my trials and tribulations that the son of God came among us to dispel the darkness? What darkness in my life needs to be exposed to the

light? What difference will that make in my life? What will Christmas mean to me and for me?

What we truly long for is a promise that will sustain us on the journey toward Jesus’ birth, an assurance that hope, peace, joy, and love will be born in our own hearts. All these doubts and fears, these ponderings and longings we model in liturgy.

The symbolism of the Advent wreath can be seen as a token of the promise of Christmas, a gradual revelation of the light that shines in the darkness; one which the darkness will not overcome. In this way, the five candles of hope, peace, joy, love, and the Christ candle itself are totemic. They are symbolic vessels of longings we cannot put into words and of promises that God whispers into fulfillment by coming among us in the person of the Son.

The first gesture of God’s love for us that we desire when we are in darkness is hope. Darkness is the symbol of all in our lives that is marked by despair. For in the darkness we can’t see what is next. And God so created us that we are driven relentlessly to look to tomorrow, while we struggle not to lose sight of today. And it is in the flame of the candle of hope in our Advent wreath, that we are first able to see that there is a light beyond darkness, a hope beyond despair, and a tomorrow beyond the here and now.

The next fruit of the incarnation for which our souls long is peace. When we dwell in darkness, all the failings that stain our consciences are obscured by shadow. All that we would hide from the world and from ourselves is allowed to fester and grow beyond our capacity to control or admit. Peace is all about confronting our failings in ourselves and in our neighbor. When we light the peace candle, we are accepting God’s promise to reconcile ourselves with God and with our neighbor.



**THE REV'D CANON  
STEVEN MACKISON**

The candles of hope and peace are our preparation to meet God in the manger of God’s choosing. The lights of peace and hope allow us to approach a fragile and helpless God-child because our own brokenness and vulnerability have been revealed.

From here on in, the light that comes to us in Advent is not so much about us, as it is about God. And it is in the candle of joy that our anticipation of Emmanuel—God among us—begins to take shape as we step away from our own shadows. A feeling, an intuition, barely perceptible, at the edge of our



experience is revealed and a promise of joy begins to draw us inexorably toward the light of the Nativity.

Then comes love. With much of the darkness dispelled, we are able to see that the promises of God—the gifts of hope, peace, and joy—are given, not merely for own edifications, and not just to glorify the giver, but in an unblemished

offering of true love. It is only when God enlightens us—allowing us to see ourselves for who we truly are—and ignites the flame of God’s steadfast love, that we are able to accept that we are God’s cherished ones.

Then comes the gift of God’s very self. When the spark ignites the Christ Candle and the last shadow is dispelled, we are able to see with undiminished clarity what we mean to God; we see the incarnation for what it is. The light of Christ that comes to us on Christmas Eve is the first gesture of God’s love and the completion of what we are intended to be. For in becoming us, God embraces humanity in all its fallenness and promises to never let go. From the moment the light is kindled and we are able to

see that gesture, darkness loses all its power over our lives. For what we fear even more than facing the darkness is facing the darkness alone. In becoming one of us, God utters his second “let there be light” and enshrines it in the same vessel that carries our fragile spirits, human flesh.

In other words, not only are you not alone, but in Christ the perfect unity of God’s triune being has become enfleshed and visible in you—forever. Pray, therefore, that as you make your Advent journey, you may see the light in the darkness and know that the babe of Bethlehem will come to fill your heart with presents: hope, peace, joy, love, and with the presence of God himself.

Have a blessed Advent and may light perpetual shine upon you!

Steven ✠



A concert benefitting The Common Table,  
Redeemer's drop-in meal program for people  
experiencing homelessness and marginalization.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8TH | 2-4PM**  
Church of the Redeemer | Corner of Avenue and Bloor, 162 Bloor St. West

*Performances by:*

Michael-Robert Broder	Greg Godovitz	Will Reid
Jean Bubba	Toby Hughes	Michelle Rumball
Jill and Mike Daley	The Redeemers	Greg Wyard

Tickets can be purchased online at [www.theredeemer.ca](http://www.theredeemer.ca), in person on Sundays, or in the office during the week.  
Please choose your level of support: \$40/\$25/\$10  
(all tickets have equal access). All proceeds go directly to the vital community work of our outreach program.

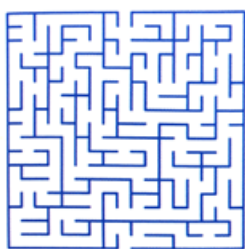
**THE COMMON TABLE**  
Redeemer's Drop-in Community

# Labyrinth walk: Advent meditation

Susan Graham Walker

## Definitions:

A *maze* is a complex branching (multicursal) puzzle that includes choices of path and direction, may have multiple entrances and exits, and dead ends. A *labyrinth* is unicursal i.e. has only a single, non-branching path, which leads to the center then back out the same way, with only one entry/exit point.



MAZE Puzzle designed to confuse



LABYRINTH Long, guided path

Source: [Design is Storytelling](#), by Ellen Lupton

Life can feel like a maze sometimes with many and complex decisions, confusion and seeming dead ends are a daily occurrence. You can lose your way in a maze and may never get out.

Experiencing life as a labyrinth is quite a different experience. Here the path is your guide taking you on a winding journey. With no decisions on where to turn there is time for reflection, observation and attention to the experience itself as a way of freeing oneself to listen to the inner voice, meditate and pray. There is no getting lost in a labyrinth.

Labyrinths have been around for millennia and are enjoying a renaissance in recent decades with the discovery of ancient ones hidden under flooring or chairs (as at Chartres Cathedral in France), being freshly built (like the one at Trinity Square in the Eaton's Centre) or painted on canvas.



Much can be said and there are many ways to explore the labyrinth experience. We have one such opportunity at Redeemer when we will have a portable labyrinth from Timothy Eaton United Church set up in our worship space on the evening of December 3. Gather at 7PM with a brief introduction at 7.30PM. The rest of the evening is turned over to a time of pilgrimage closing at 9PM. Please register through the church website for this event

Come with a journal, stocking feet, curiosity and openness to the spirit in this season of Advent.

Brought to you by Learning @ Redeemer.







# Redeemer Kids

## UPCOMING EVENTS

As Redeemer Kids gather for church school in November and January, they will continue to learn creatively about the life of King David. If your child would like to be a part of the Redeemer Kids program (JK to Grade 6), or you are interested in volunteering, please contact Rev'd Roshni (roshni@theredeemer.ca)

### Sunday December 1 at 9.30AM Christmas Pageant Rehearsals Begin

Christmas Pageant rehearsals begin during the 9.30AM service for Redeemer Kids and Youth and will continue throughout the four Sundays of Advent during the 9.30AM service. If your child or youth is interesting in participating in the pageant, please join the rehearsals. The Christmas pageant will be the proclamation of the word at the 5PM Christmas Eve service.



### Sunday December 1 at 10.45AM Family Advent Wreath Making

All are invited to the parish hall to decorate an Advent wreath for their household on Sunday, December 1 at 10:45 AM. Materials needed to make the wreaths will be provided, but if your family has a wreath frame that you can reuse, please bring it with you. To ensure we have enough supplies, please RSVP to Rev'd Roshni (roshni@theredeemer.ca) by Monday November 25. ✝



*The Rev'd Roshni Jayawardena would love to hear from any who have questions about our children's programs. You can reach her through the church office or by email (roshni@theredeemer.ca)*

# NEWS FROM THE LOFT: Youth Group Happenings

The youth have had an exciting fall of learning, cooking and playing! Together, we have explored the Genesis creation accounts as well as creation stories from New Zealand and Maya.

The youth group took a leadership role in hosting the Birds of Prey presentation and offering a visual symbol of our solidarity for Orange Shirt Day. We have cooked healthy and delicious food for Common Table with Didy and volunteered our time to prepare and serve food on a PA Day. We have built community and laughed during board games and bowling.

And we have lots of exciting things coming up! On December 8 we will have our annual cookie baking day from 11AM-3PM. We'll make hundreds of cookies which will be packaged and delivered as part of Redeemer Gifts this Christmas.

The youth will also be involved in the Christmas Pageant in a variety of fun and creative ways! We look forward to sharing this most holy story with you all on Christmas Eve!



Lastly, our youth are planning on attending the Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth (CLAY) Gathering which will take place from August 20-23, 2020 in Calgary. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet youth from across Canada, learn, pray and serve together. We are planning some fundraising projects for the new year and are so grateful for any and every contribution toward this opportunity.

*For more information about youth ministry at Church of the Redeemer, contact Hilary Keachie, pastoral associate for youth and young adults ([hkeachie@theredeemer.ca](mailto:hkeachie@theredeemer.ca))* ✝





# Celebration of New Ministry









# TRAVEL FOR LEARNING: *Wild Rice* *(Manoomin)* *Harvesting*

Carolynn Bett and Darlene Varaleau

Travel for Learning celebrated another magical adventure at Curve Lake First Nation, harvesting and preparing wild rice (manoomin) with James Whetung and 19 allies mostly from around Toronto. CBC was filming our adventure in preparation for a documentary that will be aired in February with Drew Hayden Taylor as the host.

The day began with smudging, prayers, and the burning of tobacco so that our prayers could rise with the smoke.

Manoomin was an essential part of community health, ceremony and food security before the waters around Curve

Lake were flooded, the lakes contaminated by agricultural run-off, and the plants destroyed to accommodate cottage developments.

Manoomin is actually an aquatic grain that contains more than 12 percent protein, is gluten free, low in fat, and an excellent source of iron, potassium and phosphorus, as well as vitamins like thiamine, riboflavin and niacin. In fact, manoomin has more overall nutrition than any other food available in traditional native diets. Not only did diabetes not exist when Indigenous people lived off their traditional foods but the Fall manoomin harvest was a time for community celebration and ceremony. Manoomin was considered one of the most generous gifts of Great Spirit to the Anishnawbe people.



We launched our canoes to harvest the manoomin with the bow person steering and the stern person bending the grain over the canoe with one pole and knocking the seeds off with another. We were not very productive...so it was wonderful to have a generous lunch waiting for us when we returned.







nower made from a furnace fan, duct pipes and bright red duct tape. He bags and sells the manoomin chaff to builders of straw-bale houses to reinforce their glue. The inspiration and creativity of his enterprise reflects a resilience that has resisted all efforts at colonization.



After lunch, we went to the processing shed to see thousands of pounds of manoomin drying, being aerated with a hay fork and the debris (and lots of beetles) removed.

The next step was to roast the manoomin in a

vast cauldron over a fire cleverly contained within an old oil tank. We stirred endlessly with wooden canoe paddles (like Macbeth's witches) so that the manoomin would not burn.

And then we danced in the cauldron to separate the chaff from the seed and finally winnowed the grain using a sheet to toss the manoomin into the air. A persistent wind was our friend with the winnowing.

An entire community would be required to complete all these preparations, so James now has an airboat designed by the Ardoch First Nation (and discovered at a Manoomin conference). He also has a revolving electric drum roaster and a win-





What can we do to acknowledge and support this resilience? In addition to contributing to the charity **Indspire** (which supports Indigenous post secondary students [indspire.ca](http://indspire.ca)), the **Indspire** newsletter suggests the following:

1. Support emerging artists and musicians
2. Watch films and documentaries made by Indigenous people
3. Read books written by or about Indigenous people
4. Learn the history of residential schools
5. Attend a cultural event e.g. pow wow
6. Explore authentic Indigenous experiences
7. Be an ally by volunteering or attending a gathering

Redeemer's Indigenous Solidarity Working Group (ISWG) offers opportunities to pursue all these activities. We hope to engage Drew Hayden Taylor for a screening of the CBC documentary when it is released in February.

Pamela Thomson's W.I.N.D. (Weekly Indigenous News Digest) lists brilliant events in Toronto and across Ontario. Contact Pamela Thomson to be added to the W.I.N.D mailing list. [iswg.redeemer@gmail.com](mailto:iswg.redeemer@gmail.com)

*Carolynn Bett and her team co-ordinate Travel for Learning and promote opportunities for the parish to attend artistic and cultural events in and around Toronto. Watch eNews for our next excursion.* ✚

## Redeemer Gifts

Each year, the parish reaches out to those who may be having a difficult Christmas. Members of the pastoral care team and parishioners deliver a special gift that has the personal touch of participation by the children and youth group. Gifts of socks are delivered to residents of the retirement and long-term care facility Sienna Living, many of whom are isolated and often not remembered at Christmas.



All are invited to help make Redeemer Gifts happen by:

- ◆ Contributing toward the cost (Please mark your contribution "For Redeemer Gifts" and place it on the offering plate during the service);
- ◆ Helping assemble gifts on **Friday, December 13;**
- ◆ Delivering the gifts on **Saturday, December 14** by car, on foot or transit. We begin at 9 AM and it will take about 1.5 hours.

If you are interested in being part of Redeemer Gifts, please speak with Tony Crosbie

## The Upcoming Retirement of Shirley Westmore

Our office manager, Shirley Westmore, will retire on December 31, 2019. An announcement was made at services on Sunday, November 3.



Shirley has been a steadfast presence in the office for more than 20 years, and we will miss the knowledge, care and support she offered to the community.

We will celebrate Shirley's ministry in our midst on **Sunday, December 15.**



# All Saints Day





# Truth and Reconciliation – *Turning The World Upside Down*

Stephen Allen

## Circle with Survivors

On Saturday, September 21, 25 members of Redeemer sat in a Circle with Survivors of Indian residential schools. The Rev'd Canon Andrew Wesley provided able and wise leadership. We listened intently to painful stories of those who attended residential schools. They shared their experiences with courage and dignity. Listening to Survivors' experiences about this horrendous chapter in Canada's history was a powerful reminder that bearing witness is not a passive act, but an active one. Archbishop Mark MacDonald has described the impact of the Indian Residential School system as a moral wound on Canada.

## Blanket Exercise

The following Saturday, September 28, participants from Church of The Redeemer were joined by members of an organization called The Bold Pros to do the Blanket Exercise. Blankets are spread on the floor to represent Turtle Island (many Indigenous people refer to North America as Turtle Island). Through the narrative developed for the Blanket Exercise, Indigenous-Settler relations are explored. Esther Wesley who recently retired as the co-ordinator for the Anglican Church of Canada's Healing Fund, led us through the Blanket Exercise with assistance from Melanie Delva, the Anglican Church's Reconciliation Animator. The Blanket Exercise was first developed by the Aboriginal Rights



Coalition (ARC) in 1996. ARC was one of the ecumenical coalitions brought together to create KAIROS in 2001.

## Orange Shirt Sunday:

On Sunday, September 29, Redeemer marked Orange Shirt Sunday. Melanie Delva was our guest preacher. Her sermon is on the church's web site. We were delighted and grateful that Archbishop Mark MacDonald presided at the 9.30 and 11.15AM services. It was gratifying that so many people wore an orange piece of clothing and for those who weren't wearing orange clothing, the youth had a solution. With assistance from Hilary Keachie, the youth







had cut pieces of orange cloth parishioners could wear around their arms. For information on Orange Shirt Day see: <http://www.orangeshirtday.org/>

### Upcoming - New Anglican Video:

**On Wednesday, November 27, 7PM**, a new Anglican video called *Doctrine of Discovery: Stolen Lands, Strong*

*Hearts* will be shown in the parish hall. The film features Indigenous leaders, legal scholars, a senator, historians, allies, and church leaders who help us to understand what the Doctrine of Discovery is, how it has historically impacted Indigenous peoples, and where we see it alive and well today. We are pleased that The Rev'd Canon Ginny Doctor, co-ordinator for Indigenous Ministries in the Anglican Church of Canada, will be our guest resource person. Doctor compiled and wrote the study guide that accompanies the film.



### Advent—Turning The World Upside Down

Jim Wallis, founder of Sojourner's Magazine, has described Advent as a manifesto for turning the world upside down. Advent is a time of waiting for the One who will transform the world. Surely, truth telling, healing and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples is part of God's plan for turning the world upside down.

*Stephen Allen chairs the Indigenous Solidarity Working Group. If you would like to learn more about the work of the group, Stephen looks forward to answering your questions.*





# SEASON OF CREATION 2019

SEASON OF  
CREATION











On September 8 Steven blessed the backpacks of Redeemer Kids (and adults) at the beginning of a new school year and the return to busier work schedules following summer.



On October 6, we said farewell to our facilities manager Kiefer Shields, and thanked him for his work over the last two years improving our facilities and coordinating the many activities at Redeemer.





# INSPIRED TO GIVE

Ryan Carlsen and Sara Lawson

## What are we doing?

You've already heard representatives of some of the ministries we have at Redeemer talk about why that ministry is important to our mission here at the corner. You've also heard testimonials from parishioners who support those ministries prayerfully, practically and financially, conveying why they are important to them.

## Why are we doing this?

Sometimes we need a reminder about the breadth of ministry we do! Perhaps you already know everything we do, but someone who is new to the community might not be aware. And if you've been coming here for a long time, maybe you'll learn about a new dimension to the work.

## We want everyone to be inspired!

We want you to be inspired by these stories, to think about these ministries as our witness in different ways. Consider the import of that ministry to this community, to those beyond our doors, and to yourself. When we passed the budget at this year's Vestry meeting, these are the ministries we decided were important enough to commit our resources to.

Each of these ministries is supported by generous volunteers who give their time and share their God-given skills and experience. These ministries are also supported by the donations that



you give—in the collection plate, through automated monthly giving, or through a legacy gift.

As you hear these stories, we ask you to think about how they inspire you, to be grateful this work is done, and to prayerfully consider how **you** can share in ministry through your generosity.

*Ryan Carlsen is chair of the Stewardship Committee and Sara Lawson is a committee member. We are grateful for their gift of time to the important work of considering how we share our own gifts of time, talent and treasure.*



Henry Krol describing the accomplishments of the Refugee Settlement group

## PARISH NOTES

### BAPTISM

Cole Taylor Whitmore Homuth

*May the power of the Holy Spirit work within them, that being born of water, and the Spirit they may be a faithful witness of Jesus Christ.*

### MARRIAGE

Elyse Kathrine Watkins and  
Cody Austin Douglas Pentzos

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





# SERVICES OF NOTE

## THE ADVENT CYCLE

We gather in darkness and we wait for the light to break through. The light that grows week by week. We await the One who is the light of the world. Each week, a candle on the Advent wreath is lighted.

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

**Sunday, December 8 – Advent 2 at 7PM:** Evensong is a quiet, peaceful way to continue the journey through Advent

**Tuesday, December 10 – 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. For others of us it will be uncertainty about community, the world around us, God's beloved creation that adds weight to the days. The Blue Christmas service creates liturgical place for those who need healing. Join us at 6 PM. A reception will follow.

**Sunday, December 15 – Advent 3 at 7PM:** Join us for the Great O Antiphons Vespers

**Sunday, December 22 – Advent 4 at 7PM:** At tonight's Bach Vespers service, the choir will sing Cantata 243 – the Magnificat.

## CHRISTMAS

*O Come All Ye Faithful*—words of a familiar carol yes, but also an invitation. Come—gather together as we immerse ourselves in the age-old story that seems new again Come—sing the carols and songs that tell of the birth of Jesus—the Light of the Word—come into our world so long ago and born in us again now. Come—gather around the table and celebrate—Jesus, bread for our journey, and cup of salvation. Come!

### Tuesday, 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 Christmas Eve Eucharist*

Come and join us for a celebration of Christmas with carols, music led by the Rock Eucharist band, and the Eucharist.

*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.

**Wednesday, 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

**Sunday, December 29 – Christmas I:** Services at 8, 9.30 and 11.15 AM. Please note that there will not be an evening service.

**Sunday, January 5 – 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 and 11.15AM Sung Eucharist with nursery care and children's resources.

**Sunday, January 12 – Baptism of Christ:** At the morning services, we draw near the water to remember our own baptismal ministry as we are called into the world to serve. At 7PM we mark the season with Epiphany Vespers – a service with choral music and brass.

**Sunday, January 19 – Rock Eucharist at 7PM:** The first Rock Eucharist of the new year features the music of Tears for Fears.

**Sunday, January 26 – Shape-note Eucharist at 7PM:** Sacred Harp shape-note singing will be the basis for the music of our Eucharist this night.



### Mark the days of Advent at Redeemer with times of prayer and reflection.

This year we will be part of #AdventWord—a global advent calendar. Each year we are offered the opportunity to receive a daily AdventWord meditation and respond with an image on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. You can go to [adventword.org](http://adventword.org) to sign up for the daily reflections. We will include an image that matches each day's word on our daily social media posts and invite you to join us.

The practice of daily prayer for the season of Advent is an important tradition at Redeemer and continues this year. Using the theme of the Jesse tree, each week daily prayer booklets will be available in church and on the website on Sundays.