



REDEEMER NEWSLETTER



Letter from the Pastor



To all the Saints of Redeemer,

I am going to talk with you this month about the busyness in our lives and invite us to intentionally take time in our day to turn our hearts and minds to God. We might do this in prayer, in Bible Study, or in quiet contemplation of God. All of these are good to do. These are tools we have been given by God to help us turn to the one who is our source and is our life.

If you are like me, family and community obligations pull on you all the time. This seems to be true whether we are in school, still in the workforce, or retired. Years ago, my friend David Frye told me that between his church and his volunteering, he was busier in retirement than he was when working. David was a retired Air Force officer and hospital administrator, so he knew what busy was. We have so many things pulling on our lives, no matter what part of life we are in.

My question for you, and for me is, amid all that we have going on, how do we make time for God? I am not asking this question to guilt anyone. I admit that I struggle sometimes to find the time to pray as much as I think I should. I don't spend as much time in the Bible as I know I should. I get swept up in all I have going on and before I know it, I am exhausted at the end of the

day. More times than not I am falling asleep as I am trying to remember in prayer all that I want to lift to God that day. As Paul would say, “Oh wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death” (Romans 7:24).

What I have found is that when I stop to pray, to read the Bible, or just to quietly contemplate our Lord, I find it goes better for me. That doesn't mean that these times with God necessarily give me warm fuzzy feelings. But I have observed that when I turn to our Lord, I feel less anxious, I feel better able to deal with challenges, and it helps me to put things in perspective. If you asked me how that works, I would have to say I can't diagram it out. But the time I spend with God changes me to help me face what the world throws my way.

You may know that Martin Luther was a big proponent of prayer. A famous quote of his was, “I have so much to do today that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer.” Luther understood that the source of his life and his strength was the God who made him. When he started his day with prayer, and turning his heart to God, he had more of the strength that he needed for the day.

I am not expecting any of us to start each day with three hours of prayer. Or three hours of Bible study, or whatever devotion we want to pick up. That would be like all of us deciding we wanted to get in shape and then trying to run a marathon this afternoon. That way would end in suffering and tears.

What I propose is that if you are like me, and would like to spend more time with God, we take a small step to make that happen. To go back to the marathon analogy, very few people are going to be able to jump us and run 26.2 miles. Especially if you are not a dedicated runner already. But if we wanted to make this our goal, all of us could try walking a little more each day. Then we could try walking for five minutes and jogging for five minutes. Then we could try to jog a quarter mile, and then a half mile. Eventually, if we stay with it, we might just run the marathon. Small steps get big results.

We can use a similar pattern when we try to start any new practice of habit. We start where we are, decide where we want to go, and take a step in that direction. So, I would invite you to consider if you would like to, like me, spend more time with God, what are the steps you could take in that direction. I find that specific examples help me ground my thinking, so I wanted to offer some possibilities we might consider. I realize that some of you already do more than the examples I am lifting up. But use these if they are helpful. If you have other ideas, please let me know.

Giving time to Prayer – I hope that we all pray every day. But I know there are some days when all of us could forget to pray. If you would like to pray each day, or increase the times you pray each day, consider setting a time when you will pray. For example, think about taking thirty seconds before a meal to say a silent prayer of thanksgiving. Thank God for what you are grateful for. I think this could be in addition to any meal blessing. It would allow you to carve out a time of the day when you can say, “I am praying”. Another place you might consider praying is in your car. God is everywhere and hears us at all times. What would it be like to turn off the radio and have a conversation with God? Remember, that now that so many people have Bluetooth in their cars, if anyone sees you talking to yourself they will just think you are a phone call. You would be on a phone call with Jesus.

Spending Time with Scripture – If you want to take more time in scripture here are some ideas you could try. My most accessible Bible is on my phone. I have an app that has the complete NRSV Bible. It was free and I literally always have it with me. If you want to read the Bible more, that is one easy way to do it. You don't have to search for your book, it is right there with you. I would also recommend audiobooks of the Bible. There are many of them, and several of them are available free online. I like listening to readings of the Holy Scripture because it reminds me that in the early church, that was the main way people experienced the Bible. They heard it. Another thing you might try is keeping your Bible on your bedside table, and telling yourself you will read five to ten verses before going to bed. Combined with evening prayers this is a great way to center ourselves before sleep.

Just taking time with God – we have talked in the Sunday morning discussion group about a type of prayer called Contemplative Prayer. It is a form of ancient Christian meditation where we just sit still, try to clear our minds, and know that we are in the presence of God. You can do this anywhere. In the fall in Maine, I love to walk in the woods and sometimes I will just stop and listen. I will ponder the beauty of the creation around me and know that God holds me and all I see in the palm of his hand. As we move into this arguably more beautiful season of the year, take some time to ponder all that God has done, and sit in God's presence. Better said, remind yourself that no matter what you do you are in the presence of your Heavenly Father.

These are some suggestions. The goal is for each of us to have that time with God in prayer, scripture study, or sitting in God's presence. No matter how busy I am, stopping to turn to the Lord always helps me. I wish I could say it makes everything better. God doesn't always take our problems away. But God does help settle us, center us, and sends what we need to face the challenges in our path.

As your pastor let me just say it as clearly as I can, spending time with God is good for you. Luther said in his large catechism that if we really understood what was going on in the holy mysteries (and he was talking about communion) then we would be beating down the door to get to the table. We get so much more from our time with God than we can measure. I want to invite you to take advantage of the gift that God gives us. God gives us time with Himself. God is always around us. I invite you to give yourself the gift of time with your Lord. It will bless you more than you know.

God bless you, my dear friends,
+Pastor Michael



Where did you see Jesus?

Pastor Michael continues to invite us to reflect on where we saw Jesus moving in our lives and around us. The hope is that we begin to see how active God, our Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit is in the world around us. Reflecting on this helps

us to keep our eyes open.



We have a lot coming up at Redeemer. Make sure to join us as we gather for worship and fellowship in the next months.



Faith Formation and Confirmation

Faith formation and Confirmation are starting this month at Redeemer. Faith Formation will take place every other week. The pastor is going to invite families with Confirmation age youth to a conversation about what might work best for everyone. We have 3 youth who started confirmation earlier this year, we have another six who are ready to begin. We will find a time that works for everyone.



Midweek gatherings at Redeemer

Tuesday mornings at 930, the Fiber Arts group gathers in the library. All are welcome to come for this time of fellowship. On Wednesday morning our weekly Bible Study gathers at 9am to study the scripture readings for the coming week. Please join us.

Redeemer Lutheran Church
 540 Essex Street, Bangor, ME 04401
 2023-2024 Fiscal Year Pledge to support God's work
 through Redeemer Lutheran Church
 Name(s) _____
 Email address _____
 Mailing Address _____
 I/We pledge \$ _____ weekly, or

Please Return your Estimate of Giving for 2024 - October 8th

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the "Our Daily Bread" stewardship program in September. Please remember that our stewardship team is asking that we return our Estimate of Giving forms by Sunday October 8th. If you need a form they are available at the church.



Harvest Sunday for ELCA World Hunger – October 15

On October 15th you are invited to bring items to worship for our work to support ELCA World Hunger. In the past years, people have brought crafts, jams and jellies, artwork, and anything that you feel someone might appreciate. Members are invited to take the items and make a donation to ELCA World Hunger. Last year we were able to raise over \$700 to help feed people around the world. This is also a fun way to share some of the gifts God has given us with the rest of the congregation.



Sunshine Service – October 15

Sunshine Service will meet on October 15th at 1:30pm. We have a continued to welcome more friends and neighbors. We would love to have you join us to worship, pray, and visit with our neighbors. All are welcome.



Reformation Sunday and Oktoberfest – October 29

Redeemer's annual Oktoberfest will be held on Reformation Sunday, October 29. There is a sign up to bring food on the bulletin board near Nancy's office. As it is Reformation Sunday, we will also be inviting everyone to wear red for worship. Also please remember, whenever there is food it is a great time to invite people to church. Welcome your friends and neighbors to join us for our Reformation/Oktoberfest celebration.



Fall Festival November 4

The Redeemer Fall Festival is scheduled for the first Saturday of November, (November 4th). We need volunteers to help with set up, help run the rummage and book sales, work in the kitchen, and much more. Please see the sign up sheets on the bulletin board by the sanctuary. If you have items you would like to donate to the festival, we are asking that you bring them in the last week of October and first week of November. Thank you to everyone who is helping bring the festival back to Redeemer.



Thanksgiving Day Meal at Redeemer – November 23

All are invited to a meal at the church on Thanksgiving day. If you don't want to cook and would like to gather with friends please join us. A sign-up sheet to bring food to share will be put up in the church later in October. If you would like the Thanksgiving experience of a meal with friends, but don't want to have to cook everything yourself, consider joining us. You also may consider coming to join for Thanksgiving lunch before heading to a Thanksgiving dinner.



Advent Midweek Worship and Supper – November 29

Advent starts at the end of November. We will be starting our Wednesday midweek worship and soup suppers on Wednesday, Nov. 29th. Please begin to consider finding time for gathering together in the season of Advent. It is a wonderful time for fellowship and offers us the chance to turn our hearts to God in the midst of what is always a busy season. Advent midweek worship will be held on Wednesdays, Nov. 29 – Dec. 20th.



Our 2023 Christmas Pageant is Just around the Corner

During Advent we will be putting together our Christmas Pageant and program which we will present on Sunday, December 17th. We need people to help with the planning, rehearsing and carrying out of the program. If you are interested in helping with the youth Christmas Program, please speak to Pastor.



Please continue to pray for the call of our next New England Synod Bishop

In June at the New England Synod Assembly, we will be gathering to call the next Bishop of the New England Synod. Bishop James Hazelwood is retiring after 12 years of service to the Synod. Please pray that God will lift up the person that we need to help shepherd the Synod forward. We also will need two people from Redeemer to attend the Synod Assembly in June and be part of the discernment process. If you have any interest please speak to Pastor as he can share with you more about the process.



We thank God for all that has been happening at Redeemer.



Dignity First Tiny House has a roof and is ready for interior work

At the end of the summer we agreed to partner with Dignity First to help them construct a tiny house to help provide housing for the unhoused and homeless in the Bangor area. The exterior work is completed. There is a lot more to do, but this is a big step for this project. We want to thank Redeemer's own David and Chuck who have given countless hours to the project. There will be some additional work days coming up in the next few months. We will let you know and invite anyone to come and help with the project.



God's Work Our Hands Sunday

For this year's God's Work Our Hands Sunday we took on several projects that allowed us to reach out to our neighbors and the greater community. After worship on Sept. 10th we gathered as a church to make care cards to share with people around our community. We also baked cookies to take to our local emergency responders. At lunch time a group went over to Phillip Strickland House to visit with the residents and to sing Christmas carols in September. On Monday, we took cookies to the fire and police dept in Bangor. Thank you to all who took part and helped us share a little of the love of Christ with our community.



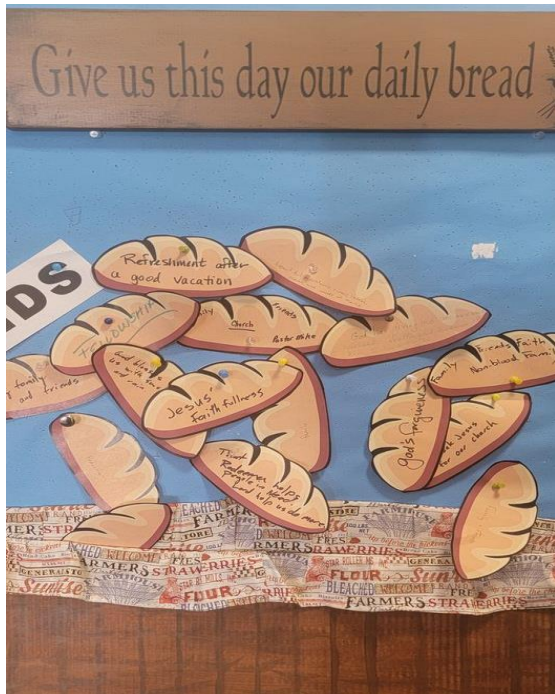
Redeemer Men's Group met at Smoke and Steel in Bangor

In September the Redeemer Men's Group had their inaugural meeting. We gathered at Smoke and Steel in Bangor for axe throwing and fellowship. The goal is to try and get the Men's group together monthly (weather permitting) to help identify ways we can serve and to build relationship. Thanks to everyone who came out for the gathering.



Sunday Sunnies feeds neighbors at Columbia St. Baptist

Our Sunday Sunnies group fed around 40 of our neighbors on Sunday, Oct. 1. All of the food that was served was provided and prepared by Redeemer members. Thank you to everyone who provided food and/or served our neighbors. The next time Redeemer will prepare lunch at Columbia Street will be in December.



Our Daily Bread Stewardship Program

In September we took part in the New England Synod “Our Daily Bread” stewardship program. We are thankful to the stewardship team who have led us through this program and to all who helped us gather our estimated giving forms for the coming year. We appreciate all of you supporting the ministry of Redeemer and sharing the gifts which God have entrusted to you.



The Redeemer Book of the Month for Oct. is “The Wit of Martin Luther”, by Eric W. Gritsch. Two straight book on humor? A book on Martin Luther for Oct.? Why not? Luther’s humor is a key to his entire life and his appreciation of the frailty of human life. He relished humor in his interpretation of the Bible, pastoral relationships, and even death. Refreshing views of a pastor often deemed stern and humorless.

As usual, the book will be available on the table in the entryway. Enjoy.

-- Bob Buntrock
Redeemer Librarian



October Birthdays

October 5 Willa Rhyne
October 19 Chuck Orndoff
October 23 Pastor Michael Rhyne
October 27 Virgil Barker

