

TIDINGS

Newsletter

Redeemer Lutheran Church
1545 Chain Bridge Road
McLean, VA 22101

Vol. 69 No. 7
July 2024



Our mission is to share Christ's love
with the greatest number of people.

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A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR KESSINGER

JULY OF 2024 SUMMER PLANNING

Our Ministry Staff

The summer months are the best time to do some planning and we are well underway. One of our first priorities has been to fill some of our staff vacancies. We are excited to welcome Katrina McNair as our new Pre-school Director. She is well qualified for the position and is also very enthusiastic about being part of our ministry team. Already she has fit in well with our teachers, other staff members and especially our children.

We also had a transition with the Evening Host position. Jonathan is no longer with us and over the summer Milo Engel is taking on that role. Milo's presence gives us some space to find a more permanent replacement in the fall. Milo has worked at Redeemer before (in this position and as a Summer Camp teacher). He works hard and is very responsible. We are grateful for the time he can give us until the middle of August.

Our council has worked on how to best fill in some of the other gaps that we have in our ministry. A job description was developed for a Communications / Programming position. Our intent is to increase the ways we engage with our own members and especially our youth. We want to set up opportunities for people of all ages to connect with our ministries and with each other. We want to increase our volunteer base with the guidance of this staff person.

We also want to improve our internal and external forms of communication. Our website needs a face-lift. Our church software that keeps all of our records needs to be redesigned to make it more efficient. How we communicate with our community and with what frequency will also be addressed. And some of the things that I currently do on a weekly basis - such as creating some of the articles for the announcements, writing the Friday emails, developing the slides that are shown on our television screen on Sunday mornings, and doing everything that is needed to livestream and post our videos - will be transferred to the staff in this position.

We have already interviewed some candidates and are in the middle of making final decisions. We want to be open to the work of the Holy Spirit as the pool of candidates is rich. After some initial conversations it is becoming clear to us that we can do even more that will enhance our ministry at Redeemer. It will definitely poised us for growth as I outlined in the June *Tidings* Newsletter.

Some Fall Plans

Aside from putting together a strong and dynamic ministry staff, I am currently working with others on the Faith Formation and Confirmation classes. I am reviewing resources that we will use when the Tuesday Women's Prayer Group reconvenes in September. I am also looking at resources that we will use for the Wednesday AM Bible Study that will start in the fall. We completed our work on the Augsburg Confession. Our new focus will be on the Biblical understanding of the Spirit.

Back to Summer

Last month I talked about making time to connect with you in different ways. It has been suggested that we visit the Museum of the Bible and The National Museum of African American History and Culture. Both are located in Washington, D.C. I have been to the African American Museum several times and learn something new each time I visit. If you are interested in either one or both museums then please mark your calendars because we have set some concrete dates for you. Once we know who wants to go we will work out the logistics.

Here are the dates and more specific details will be forthcoming in the July announcements:

Museum of the Bible - Wednesday, July 31 - 10 am

African American Museum - Thursday, August 15 - 10 am

For those who may also be interested in sharing a meal together, I have set aside Thursday, July 11, for a Lunch Bunch! We will meet at the Italian Oven at 11:30 am and share a meal together. There is no agenda other than to enjoy each other's company. If you have the time then please let me know and it is a date. The restaurant can accommodate large groups of people so let's see how many we can gather around a table. Once more the weekly announcements will have more details.

Stay in the Moment

As much as I enjoy planning for the upcoming seasons, I also encourage all of us to stay in the moment. There is so much beauty in our world especially at this time of year. For a few days I will enjoy some time in Vermont. Often I will just take a walk in a park that is close to my home where there is a creek and enough greenery to soak in some fresh air.

It is also true that if we look ahead too far, we miss what is right in front of us. It is one of the reasons that I enjoy doing home visits so much. It is during those times that whatever was going on before and whatever will happen in the future seems to take a temporary pause so that I can be fully present with the ones that I am visiting. It is pure joy!

I will definitely be staying in the moment as six of our youth and three adults head to New Orleans for the ELCA Youth Gathering. We leave on July 16 and return on July 20. Our young people will have my full attention as we walk through these days together. You can anticipate learning more about our experiences in the next newsletter. Until then please keep us in your prayers for safe travel and for all of us to experience God in all that we will see and do.

Yours in Christ -

Pastor Sandy Kessinger



SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

July 7 – 21	9 am (Traditional)	10:30 am (Contemporary)
July 28 – Sept. 1	9 am (Contemporary)	10:30 am (Traditional)

TABLE TALK (ADULT CLASS) – SUNDAYS AT 10:15 AM

WEEK OF JUNE 30

Sunday, June 30	Special Coffee Hour – 10 to 10:30 am
Wednesday, July 3	Quilting Group – 9:30 am
Thursday, July 4	Happy 4 th of July! Church Office Closed

WEEK OF JULY 7

Monday, July 8	Congregation Council – 7:30 pm (Hybrid)
Wednesday, July 10	Wednesday PM Bible Study – 7 pm (Zoom)
Thursday, July 11	Lunch Bunch at Italian Oven in McLean – 11:30 am

WEEK OF JULY 14

Sunday, July 14	Commissioning Service for ELCA Youth Gathering – 10:30 am
Tuesday, July 16	Memorial Service at Sunrise – 2 pm
Wednesday, July 17	Leave for ELCA Youth Gathering – New Orleans
Saturday, July 20	Quilting Group – 9:30 am
	Wednesday PM Bible Study – 7 pm (Zoom)
	Return from ELCA Youth Gathering

WEEK OF JULY 21

Wednesday, June 21	Wednesday PM Bible Study – 7 pm (Zoom)
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WEEK OF JULY 28

Sunday, July 28	9 am – Contemporary and 10:30 am – Traditional
Wednesday, July 31	Field Trip to the Museum of the Bible





**Minutes of
Meeting of Redeemer Congregation Council
In Person and via Zoom
June 10, 2024**

Present in Person: Lee Cronin; Sabine Detweiler; Karen Miller; Hannah Hughes; Ellen Kennedy, President; Sandy Kessinger, Senior Pastor; Gene Morrow; Nate Paukovits, Vice-President; Tyler Posey; Megan Kratz; Ed Regan, Treasurer

Present via Zoom: None

Excused: Chris Hernadi

Absent: Lena Martikainen

Call to Order:

President Kennedy called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM.

Devotions:

Pastor Kessinger led devotions based on Chapter 11, “Beginning a New Project” in *Growing Together: Spiritual Exercises for Church Committees*. The Council members discussed what it was like when they had the experience of starting something new. Each story generally had elements of uncertainty, the realization that starting something new can require the support of others, and that God is with us as we embark on the new activity. The discussion concluded with Exodus 3:10-12 and prayer.

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes from the meeting were previously approved by email.

Adoption of Agenda:

Without objection, the agenda was adopted as sent in advance of the meeting.

Pastor Kessinger Reports

Pastor Kessinger submitted her report via email in advance of the meeting. Some of the items she highlighted in her report included:

- **Connections through Pastoral Care.** PSK met with various members of the congregation, made home visits and shared meals.
- **Transferring Members.** We had one member transfer out of Redeemer.
- **First Communion.** We had four young people receive First Communion in May.
- **Burials.** PSK attended the burial of Pastors Paul and Geri Opsahl at the Washington National Cathedral.
- **Connections through Ministries of the Congregations.** This year Redeemer elected to support McLean Day (May 18) at the church only. We provided parking, water and games for the kids while they waited for shuttles. This gave us an opportunity for a more intimate experience with those we encountered. PSK and the Council acknowledged the effort of the Social Outreach committee in supporting this event.

PSK attended Preschool Graduation, led the First Communion class and held an ELCA Youth Gathering planning session with the Redeemer youth and parents. She also met with Katrina McNair, the new Preschool Director and began interviewing for the Communications and Programming Coordinator position.

- **Connections through Community.** PSK participated in a one-on-one meeting with Supervisor Dalia Palchik through Tysons Community Alliance.
- **Looking Ahead.** Ginny Cassell's funeral will be held on June 23. PSK will be on vacation July 4 – 7. Pastor Annabelle Markey will preside and preach.
- **General.** Our evening host was dismissed and replaced by Milo Engel for the summer. PSK will use the summer months to prepare for Fall and Winter.

Treasurer's Report: Ed Regan presented the financial summary for the month. Income exceeded expenses by \$79,023 for the year. Overall giving is greater than it has been over the last two years at this point of the fiscal year.

Executive Committee Summary: The Executive Committee met June 7, 2024, and developed the discussion items that we are covering this evening. Additionally, the EC considered ways to re-energize the Koinonia group and Youth Group.

Discussion Item: Personnel Update.

Renaissance Board and Preschool Director (Nate)

- Nate gave thanks for the quick turn on approvals over Memorial Day weekend. He discussed Council's role as oversight of the Board. In the future we will review the Charter's language around hiring plans and the role of the HR Committee in Renaissance hiring.

Discussion Item: Personnel Update.

Communications and Programming Coordinator

- Second round of interviews is underway.

Discussion Item: Personnel. The Personnel Manual is currently being updated to reflect changes in the Renaissance structure and Redeemer policies. A job description is being reviewed for the Communications and Programming Coordinator with an emphasis on youth ministry. Preparations for open enrollment regarding benefits for office staff is underway.

Discussion Item: Beyond Measure Update.

- Committee met on May 28. Total pledge was flat but received \$30K in real giving. Check arrived from the McLean grant for \$10,500. Need to provide some publicity for this group (e.g., ground-breaking, check presentation).
- Ice Cream Social was held by the Endowment Committee. It was well attended and raised \$700. The energy around these events is really good.
- Stewardship Committee will do a FUNdraiser on September 8th with WHOLE donuts from Krispy Kreme.

Discussion Item: Summer Engagement Activities. Several ideas for activities are being started.

- Council to take on summer Coffee Hours (Sign up genius needs to be developed.)
- Building Koinonia Group will host on 6/30.
- Hannah to check with the High School group to host a coffee hour.
- Neighborhood groups / hosting a low key potluck, BBQ over the summer. Council members would engage with each group just to hear what's going on and invite for them to participate in our ministries.
- Lunch Bunch with PSK.
- Good Grub and God – held periodically over the summer.

Ministry Reports

- Endowment Committee made a grant recommendation to Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), <https://www.taps.org/> for \$3,000. Gene Morrow moved to approve the recommendation. Ed Reagan seconded. Recommendation passed unanimously.
- Spiritual Nurture Committee met to discuss plans including Advent, Blue Christmas, a retreat in February, and parenting support and networks in the congregation.
- Stewardship will update the Volunteer Booklet by September. A Gratitude Jar in the Crossroads is being worked on. Council will begin the practice of sending handwritten thank you notes to show their gratitude.

New Business: New Stove. Stove will be installed on 6/11.

Closing Prayer:

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Adjournment:

President Kennedy adjourned the meeting at 8:50 PM.

Upcoming Dates:

Executive Committee: June 28, 2024

Next Meeting of Council: July 8, 2024

Online Giving Change

Vanco, our online giving processor, has modified the look of their application. When you use the [link](#) on our website, you will see a more modern and improved look. Behind the scenes, your giving through your credit card, debit card, or bank account will be processed in the same way. If you have any questions, please contact Sara Nail, Redeemer's Financial Coordinator, at sara@redeemermclean.org.

Construction Project Updates for June

There are various trees that need to be removed from the property as part of our construction plans. Per the county guidance, more than twice that amount will be planted as replacement trees. Many of the trees being replaced are not in good health from soil erosion, crowding from adjacent trees and from just being at the end of their expected life. Also, trees native to this area will be used as replacements.

During construction, our 65-year-old boiler will be removed. That space will be repurposed as a computer equipment room. This will allow us to put our systems equipment into one area with proper cooling and security. It will also allow systems support and maintenance to be easier. As we become more dependent on automation, this will put our church operations in a better position for the future.

Redeemer has received a grant for \$7,000 from the State of Virginia and Fairfax County for conservation landscaping as part of our plans for the Natural Play Area renovations. The landscaping was specifically designed to help with water conservation and to reduce soil erosion. This landscaping improves the appearance of the play area and helps us to be better stewards of this corner of God's kingdom.

As you think about how you can support Redeemer's renovation and expansion plans, please consider one of the tax advantaged giving options. The gifting of appreciated stocks or mutual funds will help minimize capital gain taxes. Also, the gifting of retirement Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) can also lower your taxable income. See Redeemer's website under the [Giving](#) heading for more information.

Summer Bible Study Series Comparing the Gospel Stories Wednesdays through July 24

We are currently studying the healing stories found in all four gospels. We meet on Wednesday evenings at 7 pm via Zoom. We discuss the similarities and difference between the gospel accounts and their placement in the gospels. We also explore how they are relevant to our lives.

[Join us](#) for any of these sessions as they are independent of what went on before and what will come after. All are welcome!

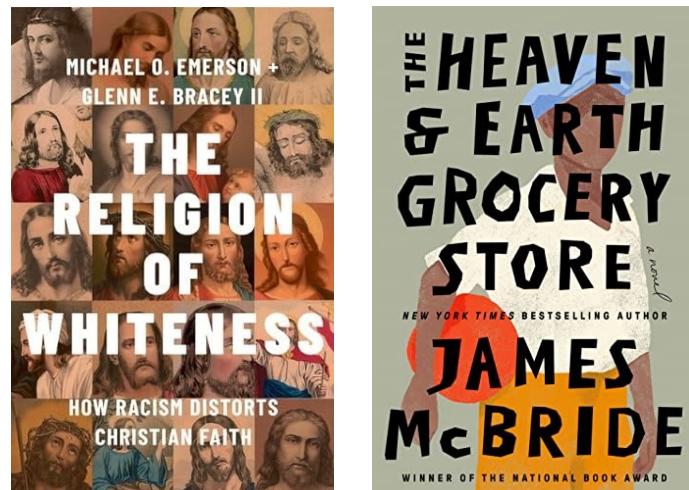
Day of Prayer: Monday, August 5

You are invited to join with others for Redeemer's next Day of Prayer on Monday, August 5. It's simple: you sign up for a half-hour segment to be part of the goal of us praying continuously throughout the day. You can pray at Redeemer or from your home or office.

Considering all the storms around the country/world in recent weeks and the temperature and storm predictions for the summer, the focus for the August Day of Prayer will be on the effects of climate change and efforts to address it. Some prayers will be available to help you get started. Please sign up by using [this link](#) or by calling the church office at 703-356-3346.

Racial Justice and Equity Book Club

Redeemer Racial Justice and Equity Book Club is reading *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store* by James McBride during the summer to discuss when we return to our Zoom meetings in the fall on September 16! After that we will be reading *The Religion of Whiteness* by Emerson and Bracey. We read about 30-50 pages each week and meet every Monday 7:30 - 8:30 pm via Zoom to discuss what we have read. Anyone is welcome to join us! If interested, please contact [Teresa Schellenger](#).



LOVE OUR NEIGHBORS with The Little Food Pantry

What is the Little Food Pantry?

It is a ministry that provides food to our neighbors.

When our neighbors are in need, **Redeemer's Little Food pantry gives them access to food 24/7 without questions, qualifications or judgments.** Redeemer's Little Pantry is between the parking lot and the sidewalk on Westmoreland Street.

Who are “OUR NEIGHBORS” ?

- **Children** who are out of school for the summer so are not receiving free breakfast and lunch

- **People living in their cars** (often with children and often working)

- **People working low income jobs** in Mclean who need lunch

- **Homeless** people living here in Mclean or who are passing through

- **People who live in a house here in Mclean.**

People experiencing food insecurity are very likely housed.

They may be unemployed, or working but still don't have enough income to pay the bills. They may be living temporarily with family members, friends trying to get back on their feet. **A pantry may be used weekly or just the week when rent is due, a medical bill needs to be paid, the utility bill is due, because finances don't stretch far enough.**

There are varying degrees of food insecurity and there's a complex relationship between food insecurity and socioeconomic factors.

How can you be a part of the Little Food Pantry Ministry?

DONATE: Non-Perishable, Nutritious, Small/Individual items.

Suggested: Canned (Fruit, Vegetables, Soups, Stews), Pasta, Crackers, Cereal, Peanut Butter. NO: Glass, Candy or Soda

Please place donations in one of the LFP Collection Bins in the Crossroads or on the SHARE cart by Door 10, or directly in the LFP.

Want to be more involved with the LFP? Have ideas or questions?

Please contact Kim Wenk at kbwenk@gmail.com

Social Outreach

Homestretch

[Homestretch](#) is a non-profit organization designed to address the root causes of homelessness for each family and reverse it.

It is one of the few programs in the country with the comprehensive services to gather each family, address each dynamic, and enable permanent change. All Homestretch clients have children under the age of 18. This is one of the reasons why a drive for back to school items is a crucial part of their services. When basic needs like food and shelter take priority over expensive school supplies, Homestretch fills the gap and gives children great confidence to go to school prepared for the year ahead.

This year Redeemer has pledged to collect glue sticks, disinfectant wipes, boxes of tissues, and packs of 24 crayons. There is an [Amazon wish list](#) that will deliver the items directly to Redeemer, or there is a collection bin in the Crossroads where you can bring in things from home. If you have any questions, please reach out to [Elizabeth Carroll](#), Redeemer's liaison to Homestretch.



Social Outreach

May Ham Report

Hello Ham Lovers,

Here is your May ham report.

On May 2, Roberta Pittman delivered 2 boxes of ham weighing 65 pounds to N Street Village from the Fairfax Honey Baked Ham store.

On May 16, Steve Greanias delivered 4 boxes of ham weighing 170 pounds to the Rising Hope Church from the Fairfax and Falls Church stores.

On May 24, Ralph Dutrow delivered 2 boxes of ham weighing 70 pounds to So Others Might Eat from the Fairfax store.

On May 31, Rick Stewart and Howie Lind delivered 4 boxes of ham weighing 140 pounds to N Street Village and 2 boxes of ham weighing 70 pounds to Martha's Table from the Fairfax and Falls Church stores.

So for the month of May, we delivered 515 pounds of ham. A good month. That brings our total for the year to 2,823 pounds of ham.

We have delivered to the following non-profit organizations: MANNA, 875 pounds of ham; Martha's Table, 810 pounds of ham; So Others Might Eat, 490 pounds of ham; N Street Village, 360 pounds of ham and the Rising Hope Church, 288 pounds of ham. All weights are approximate.

Many thanks to our ham runners and to all who participate in this program. I think we are making a difference in the fight against hunger.

Sincerely,
Rick Stewart

June Ham Report

Hello Ham Lovers,

Here is your June ham report.

On June 6, Rick Stewart delivered 3 boxes of ham weighing 105 pounds to MANNA from the Fairfax and Reston Honey Baked Ham stores.

On June 20, Laura Wareham delivered 2 boxes of ham weighing 70 pounds to MANNA from the Fairfax store.

Social Outreach

On June 27, Gordon Jones delivered 8 boxes of ham weighing 280 pounds to Martha's Table from the Falls Church and Fairfax stores.

So for the month of June, we delivered 455 pounds of ham. Well done! That brings our total for 2024 to 3,278 pounds of ham.

Our deliveries have been to the following non-profits: Martha's Table, 1,090 pounds of ham; MANNA 1,050 pounds of ham; So Others Might Eat, 490 pounds of ham; N Street Village, 360 pounds of ham and Rising Hope Church, 288 pounds of ham. All weights are approximate.

Thanks to all of our participants and may I wish you all a happy and safe 4th of July.

Sincerely,
Rick Stewart

Partner for Surgery

Partner for Surgery is an organization in Guatemala that receives a contribution from Redeemer's Social Outreach Ministry as well as financial and other donations from Redeemer members. Its mission is "To build partnerships that enable the ability to provide surgical care and other medical and prevention services to rural Guatemala."

However, many people at Redeemer may not know the story behind the founding of Partner for Surgery. Redeemer member Todd Peterson was a 1997-1999 Peace Corps volunteer in the most remote areas of Guatemala; he realized that the people living in that rural area not only lacked access to needed medical care but didn't know what resources were available in other parts of the country, didn't have financial resources to pay medical bills, lacked transportation, and spoke Mayan rather than the Spanish used in medical facilities.

Todd had been telling his parents, Frank and Linda Peterson, about what he had learned. Frank went to Guatemala in January 2001 to see how to begin addressing the needs. After he returned to the U.S., he quit his employment and he and Linda founded Partner for Surgery in spring of 2001. At the beginning, medical care was provided by teams of doctors and non-medical volunteers from the U.S. and Canada making visits to Guatemala. Over the years, partnerships were developed within the country to train local health care providers and develop sustainable health programs; now there are also partnerships with international volunteer surgical teams and others with experience in working in rural medical missions.

An early focus was providing surgical procedures for infants born with cleft palate, a condition causing malnutrition, increased poor health, and increased mortality; medical care and education programs expanded to address other medical conditions. The latest Partner for Surgery newsletter gave these year-to-date statistics:

Social Outreach

- 344 surgeries completed
- 195 children in the nutrition program
- 80 cleft lip and cleft palate surgeries.

The newsletter also reported on the local training program, the School of Continued Education for Health Promoters, that began in May 2024. The photo below shows the current participants in this program.



Frank and Linda (until her death in 2023) made regular visits to Guatemala each year to work with local staff and visiting medical volunteers. Frank continues to make those trips, taking with him gift bags for the children, mostly ages 0-5, who are having surgery. Gratitude is expressed to Heidi Stewart who was the coordinator of that project for many years; Joan Bradley now has that role. The Redeemer community donates the items for the bags (watch for requests in Sunday announcements); the cloth bags are made by Joyce Clarke and Corinne Cramer, and Joyce also makes a stuffed bear for each bag. Susan Posey and Alice Lockard manage the packing of the bags.

For more information about Partner for Surgery, go to its [website](#).



July Birthdays - We Wish You a Happy Birthday!

July 1 Alexander Griffis, Eunhee Hunter
July 2 Bill Corbett, Taylor Huber, Dave Kostelancik, Marcia Zaborsky
July 3 Judy Loving
July 4 Patrick Devlin, Tyler Straub, Anna Thorson, Margie Werntz
July 5 Lola Walraven
July 6 Margaret Duval, Tessa Lamoureux, Gunnar Torgrimson, Kelsey Torgrimson
July 7 Kate Beck, Matthew Cooley, Bill Hendricks, Hobbs Huston, Stephen Laredo
July 8 Glenna Sulkala
July 9 Jessica Opsahl-Ong, Robin Taylor, Mark Vrooman
July 10 Megan Kratz
July 11 Cameron Bost, Florence Ofili-Toviho
July 12 Kris DeLeonardis, Ryan Hughes
July 13 John Curtis, Rachel Waldon
July 14 Veronica Goff, Andrea Kuschke-DeChaine, Allison Lawrence, Ricky Michaud, Molly Sullivan
July 15 Kirsten Apple, Luke Campet, Laura Cooley, Nancy Etkin, Jay Kennedy, Philip Leibensperger, Hadley Sibert, John Tharrington
July 16 Rizza Calunia, Craig Carroll, Kristi Lehmkuhler-Reynolds, Matthew Richardson, Sharon Wesbrook
July 17 Elizabeth Brainard, Julietta Reese, Christopher Ristig
July 18 Nathan Goff, Natalie Lynch, Alice Pfaff
July 19 Anneka Demske, Brad Macomber, Greta Moi
July 20 Megan Fedorczyk, Nicholas Hutchinson, Matthew Martz, Rose Shellaway
July 21 Kimberly Cavanaugh, Laura McCoy
July 22 Andrea Dietrich, Carol Pribulka
July 23 Charlie Morris, Kirsten Olson
July 24 Scarlett Cavanaugh, Addie Dietrich, Jean Friday, Patricia Giffey
July 25 Michael McCoy, Lara Paukovits, Maggie Pishner
July 26 Mathieu Campet, Matt Koch
July 27 Cory Angus, Dan Englund, Grace Heinke, Mary-Hannah Klontz, Clinton Leonard, Grace Salzman, Alex Zele
July 28 Alice Ahlgren, Wendy Linthicum, Trevor Sheehan, Scott Wilson
July 29 Stephanie Newhall
July 30 David Carr, Douglas Gorsline
July 31 Amy Duma, Autumn Okorie, Larry Pittman, Annabel Sibert

PASTORS AND STAFF OF REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH

Senior Pastor	Pastor Sandy Kessinger	ext. 102 cell: 703-635-4672	psk@redeemermclean.org
Facilities Dir.	Bill Parks	ext. 110	bparks@redeemermclean.org
Office Manager	Cynthia Finocchiaro	ext. 101	cynthia@redeemermclean.org
Dir. of Music	Matt Osifchin		mosifchi@hotmail.com
Dir. of Preschool	Katrina McNair		preschool@redeemermclean.org
Dir. of Afterschool & Exec. Dir. Renaissance	Linda McConaughay	ext. 106	lmcconnaughay@redeemermclean.org
Financial Coordinator	Sara Nail	ext. 103	sara@redeemermclean.org
Organist	Joy Mentzel		joymentzel@gmail.com
Pianist	Kathy Detwiler		
Youth Choir Dir. & Bell Choir Dir.	Waka Osifchin		waka.soprano@gmail.com
Nursery Care	Bernarda Rodriguez Lusbi Pina		

CONGREGATION COUNCIL OFFICERS

President	Ellen Kennedy
Vice President	Nate Paukovits
Secretary	Chris Hernadi
Treasurer	Edward Regan

CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEMBERS

Lee Cronin
 Sabine Detweiler
 Megan Kratz
 Lena Martikainen
 Karen Miller
 Gene Morrow
 Tyler Posey
 And a Youth Representative