



Opening Doors

A Campaign for the Mission & Future of Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church

II Corinthians 9:8 "And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: 'They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.'"

Dear Our Redeemer's Family,

We are delighted to invite you to join us in this "Opening Doors" Campaign to ensure our church and the surrounding community will flourish both now and into the future. We believe this is one of the most significant moments and opportunities in our church's 77-year history as we re-open our spaces and re-engage as a congregation and with the broader community.

As a community in the model of Christ, we orient ourselves towards "the life of the world" and not primarily our own well-being. As our vision says, we must be willing to take risks and to face the challenges of the world around us, which we all know is in deep pain.

We have set high goals to expand this year's annual mission budget and fully retire our building debt. Our vision and the needs around us are worth aspiring to, and God will use each one of us to do what God is calling us to do...especially through our deepening generosity. The way of the Gospel, the way we are called to live, is the way of abundant life!

Will you join us on this journey of generosity? Together, let's discover a whole new dimension of joy. The more we give, the more we experience God bringing forth grace upon grace in our lives.

Thank you for joining us in "Opening Doors" to our congregation and our community.

With joy and gratitude,



Kathy Hawks
Lead Pastor



Gretchen Mertes
Associate Pastor



Margaret Berg
Campaign Co-Chair



Mike Hlastala
Campaign Co-Chair

Our History

It isn't easy to feature such a long, rich history with so many significant dates and countless events and ministries. Through all the changes, cherished traditions and faith have kept us grounded, renewed, and committed to God's vision. Our 77-year history has been shaped by God's grace, calling, and the hope we re-affirm year after year.

Here are a few highlights:

1944

A need was identified for a new church in the growing community of North Ballard. A group of mostly Swedish immigrants began worshipping and holding Sunday School at Loyal Heights School.

1945

The group, along with Bethel Lutheran Congregation (est. 1908), and 105 people, signed the charter to become Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church, part of the national Lutheran Augustana Synod of America. At the first congregational meeting, a building program was recommended.

1947

The new sanctuary was dedicated at the corner of 24th Avenue Northwest and Northwest 85th Street in Seattle in unincorporated Seattle, next to the Olympic Golf Club. Post-World War II - the congregation provided shelter and jobs for immigrant families from war-torn European countries, and helped establish Neighbors in Need, which later became the Ballard Food Bank.

1955

A new parish education unit is dedicated, along with extension of the sanctuary. Meeting and workspaces added to the structure for the rapidly expanding congregation.

1960s

Following a legacy of reaching out to people of different faiths, our pastor, Pastor Oscar Rolander, appeared with Father William Treacy, and Rabbi Raphael Levine on "The Challenge", a local, weekly television show.

1967

Property was purchased from the Catholic Archdiocese which eventually became the parking lot and property rented to the P-Patch community garden.

late
1960s

Our Redeemer's was part of the Northwest Seattle Lutheran Parish (NWSLP) which began an outreach program to "alienated" high school age youth, renting an old building north of Ballard High, called "The Place".

1972

Another building expansion was dedicated, including fellowship hall, narthex, chancel area and kitchen. It was built largely with volunteer labor. During years of growth, a strong Youth Ministry was developed, along with special ventures in Adult Education.

mid-
1970s

Everybody Place began with weekly lunch, classes, and groups for neighbors as well as members. A Vietnamese family was sponsored by the congregation. Congregation provided staffing for Neighbors in Need after the food bank was reorganized.

1976

Our Redeemer's began to support the Ballard P-Patch by renting the land to the City of Seattle for \$1 per year, beginning a 40+ year relationship.

1981

Stained glass windows in the nave and chapel were dedicated and the prayer chapel was set aside for meditation. A southeast Asian refugee family was sponsored.

2000

With declining numbers, Our Redeemer's was called to create a new vision statement: "In the model of Christ and for the life of the world, we are an inclusive, devoted, caring and spiritual community that accepts challenges, takes risks and grows".

2001

Pastor Katherine Hawks was called as Our Redeemer's first female and non-Scandinavian pastor.

2002-
2005

"Visualize Our Redeemer's" campaign and plan permitted hiring new staff, renovating bathrooms, nursery, and kitchen, replacing roof, drainage system, and repair stained-glass windows.

2004

Our Redeemer's voted to become a Reconciling in Christ congregation, welcoming people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

2008

Calvary Lutheran Church merged into Our Redeemer's.

2012

Our Redeemer's began a pilot Safe Parking program for people living in their vehicles, which still continues.

2014

Our Redeemer's adopted the strategic plan and budget to accomplish three main objectives:

- Transformative Spirituality
- Deepening Community
- Inviting People In and Ministry-focused Outreach

2021

Our Redeemer's completes a renovation to provide safety, functional, and worship upgrades to better serve the community.

2021 and
beyond

God continues to call us to **Grow in Community**, **Grow in Spirit**, and **Grow in Service**.

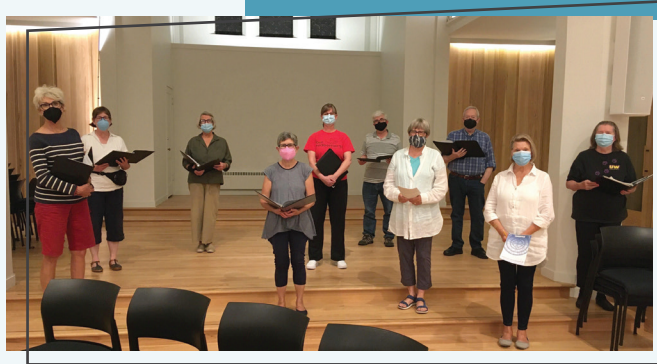
A congregation is bound to change when it's full of growing, changing people.

Who We Are Today

Although the pandemic changed so much, it could not block God's life-giving Spirit and unconditional love. Our Redeemer's is thriving more than ever, as a **community in the model of Christ for the life of the world**.

We are gathering in-person and online for worship each Sunday. Through the miracles of technical adaptations, we averaged 366 online attendees each week last year.

Our Community Caring team continues to tend to the grieving and ill, and celebrates life events, through cards, phone calls, meals, prayers and prayer shawls, and friendship calls.



"Circles of Connection" groups have formed to help combat pandemic isolation through meaningful connections on Zoom and prayer.

Our Faith Formation Team is using a five-year coaching grant to re-invigorate our passion for imparting the gift of faith to our youngest members.

We host church coffee hours, Bible studies, children's church, and more online and in person, becoming an example to other churches on how to "do church" remotely.

Pastor Gretchen Mertes and Karen Lee recorded 175 music videos used for virtual worship and are available on YouTube so everyone can access them.

Our Social Justice ministries are strong:

- Hundreds of people continued to be fed every month with take-away Ballard Sunday dinners.
- Our new Racial Justice Advocates ministry stirred us to greater awareness and engagement.
- Last year we provided 150 sleeping bags and warm hand-knit caps to people without homes through the Bridge Care Center, thirty quilts were sent to Lutheran World Relief and school kits were collected and sent to students overseas.
- Our June recycling event rescued electronics, Styrofoam, and clothing from our oceans and landfill.
- Road to Housing guests continue to live in their vehicles in our parking lot, using shower, laundry and kitchen facilities at Our Redeemer's facilities as they work toward stable housing.

Our Redeemer's Renovation is Renewing God's Vision for Us

- Our Council has adopted a new model of governance, so our congregation can be prepared for future challenges and opportunities in the path ahead.
- This year our Community Engagement Task Force is researching our neighborhood and engaging our congregation to discover how our building can best be used for God and our neighbors.
- Another task force will be engaging the congregation to consider how our strong commitment to social justice may become a cohesive and impactful plan in this moment and place.
- We are Opening Doors to a renewed culture of faithful, joyful generosity.



We put our trust in the "One who is able to accomplish abundantly more than all we can ask or imagine, according to God's power at work within us."
Ephesians 3:18-20



Opening Doors is a campaign to fund **two** initiatives which are critical for both the present and the future flourishing of Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church and our community:

Annual Mission Budget

Building Campaign

Our mission: In the model of Christ and for the life of the world, we are an inclusive, caring, devoted and spiritual community, willing to accept challenges, take risks and grow.

These two initiatives — funding an expanded vision budget and funding our new building — directly align with our vision and strategic objectives.

Annual Mission Budget: \$600,000

Why is it Essential?

We cannot pursue our God-inspired vision for our church, community, and world without a robust annual mission budget. **To carry out ministries in the following five key areas we must raise \$600,000 through gifts and pledges for our mission budget.**

- 1. Partnerships for the Life of the World:** Giving 10% of all offerings to local and global partners, we strengthen God's work of justice and mercy. As our budget grows, this 10% giving also grows.
- 2. Community Engagement & Facility Use:** Serving our North Seattle neighbors, including the most vulnerable, in new ways such as bringing people into our spaces for meals, concerts, meetings, worship, and covering increased utilities costs, etc.
- 3. Improved congregational and community connections:** New communications and technology will ensure we have capacity to connect with visitors, members, renters, and ministry partners in ways that reliably link people to each other, our congregation, and our community. This is the new front door of the church!
- 4. Worship:** Using newly-improved acoustics, lighting, accessibility, organ, broadcasting technology, and sound system to enhance in-person worship, to Zoom to those beyond our walls, and to continue to develop music and welcome ministries that nourish the spirits of all.
- 5. Staff:** Retaining, developing, and recruiting talented staff to provide continuity, adapt to changes, and create strong programs as we move into the future.



We seek to expand our mission budget because we seek to expand our impact in our community and our world. As you read your newsfeed/newspaper each day, pay attention to what causes your heart to break, and begin praying that God might give you a way to address these heartbreaks in partnership with Our Redeemer's.

The financial generosity you share on an annual basis to support the Mission and Ministry at Our Redeemer's are more important now than ever before. In a world that has been disconnected and divided for too long, your gifts allow Our Redeemer's to be a place of healing and hope - sustaining our vibrant community, reminding us of God's grace, allowing us to connect with God and one another, and calling us out of our comfort zones to share God's unconditional love with the world around us.

As you pray, consider how God might be calling you to expand your giving to the mission budget next year so that we can reach our needed goal of \$600,000. What might you gain as you give sacrificially? By giving away more than we think we can spare, we often find that we are in awe of God's abundance. The more we give, the more we experience God bringing forth grace upon grace in our lives.



Building Campaign: \$800,000

How Will This Renovation Help Achieve God's Vision?

Remember Our Redeemer's Vision Statement?

In the model of Christ and for the life of the world, we are an inclusive, caring, devoted and spiritual community, willing to accept challenges, take risks and grow.

Our renovation is truly vision-aligned.

Now neighbors can see the life within God's inclusive, grace-grounded, real, bold community of compassion and hope. New windows invite curiosity, saying "we have nothing to hide" and "you have nothing to fear" and "what you see is what you get". Our building, like our congregation, is invitational, welcoming, and accessible. Rooms of all sizes on all floors invite conversations, questions, and friendly connections.

Thanks to our renovation, our building is a significant resource for the wider community, as well as to our faith community!

We foresee becoming a venue for concerts and other arts, for non-profit and justice-seeking partners, for community and service groups and a place where neighbors of all kinds gather, community grows, and our human spirits are renewed!



Before



After

Here are some ways our building will help us achieve our mission:

In the Model of Christ

We will communicate the gospel in ways that make sense for the people in our culture and context who increasingly resonate with visual and musical language. A new sound system and projection equipment are tools for communicating the gospel message in our time.

For the Life of the World/Community

New meeting spaces are not primarily for us and will allow us to host groups of 6 to over 200 people. We will share this marvelous gift with many groups aligned with our values, and with those in need. In this way, neighbors and members together can become community, and we will contribute to the “life of the world.”

Inclusive

At last, we can offer access to people with mobility issues who will now find safer parking, easier entry, and full access to all main floor spaces — including our prayer chapel, up near the pulpit/altar, as well as meeting rooms and bathrooms. Our basement will be accessible to all from a new outside entrance and our bathrooms will be gender neutral.

Caring

We have made renovations to ensure all are safe: earthquake retrofitting, new electrical wiring, clear lighting, visual safety and AED life-support systems, safe restrooms, asbestos removal, and of course all spaces are now ADA compliant.

Spiritual

We can provide worship and prayer spaces of all sizes (sanctuary, chancel, prayer chapel) which allow individuals and groups to find quiet and beauty which nurtures their souls in our hectic, dense city. Our new building will enhance our ability as people of God to express God's word of love and grace through song and story.

The final part of our vision statement says we are a church that is willing to accept challenges, take risks, and grow. Are we? If so, let's boldly live into that vision, securing a future free of debt and with immense capacity to impact our community spiritually and materially. Let's ensure that our church will thrive for the next 77 years as it has for the past 77. Let's honor the risks and sacrifices of the charter members of our church and every person who has called Our Redeemer's “home” over the years.

How Will You Respond?

We are inviting you to go on a spiritual journey with God that involves taking steps forward in your generosity.

PRAY

1

that God will multiply our efforts with “Opening Doors” such that we meet our goal for an expanded ministry budget and can pay off our building debt.

COMMIT

2

to taking a step forward in your generosity journey by filling out both sides of the commitment card and returning it to the church.

GROW

3

by participating in the “Opening Doors” worship series: October 3, October 10, October 17, October 24, and October 31.

GIVE

4

in a way that changes you. We are asking every person who calls Our Redeemer’s home to consider making two pledges for two funds —please fill out both sides of the commitment card.

Annual Mission Budget

Our mission budget for next year is \$600,000. We ask you to prayerfully consider a **one-year pledge** which can be fulfilled between January and December 2022.

Building Campaign

To pay off our mortgage, we must raise \$800,000. Please prayerfully consider a **three-year pledge** to be fulfilled between now and November 2024.

Pledge
Annual Mission Budget

I plan to joyfully give of my time, abilities, and financial resources for God's mission through Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church. I believe God is calling us to move boldly into the future this coming year, so I plan to stretch my resources and give:

\$ _____ per week / month / year (circle one)

_____ I currently give electronically, please update my giving amount.
_____ Please contact me about how to give electronically.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Printed Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Pledge
Renovation Building Campaign to Eliminate Mortgage

Goal: \$800,000
A three-year pledge to be fulfilled between Nov. 2021 - Nov. 2024

Ways to Give

1. One time cash gift
2. 36-month goal for giving
3. Stored resources* (stocks, bonds, savings, etc.)

*Description of stored resources gift: _____

My / Our Commitment
I / we plan to give accordingly:

Weekly for 156 weeks	\$ _____
Monthly for 36 months	\$ _____
Annually for 3 years	\$ _____
A one-time gift	\$ _____
Total 36-month commitment amount:	\$ _____

My / Our Contact Information

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

You may think your gifts do not matter when compared to our total goals, but every gift matters to God. It's not about the amount but what that amount means to you. Use this chart to see how your pledges can add up over three years.

Renovation Building Campaign

Three-Year Gift Chart

Goals for 36-month Giving

Gifts Needed	3-year Gift of	Annual Gift of	Monthly Gift of	Weekly Gift of	Gift Level Total
1	\$150,000	\$50,000	\$4,167	\$962	\$150,000
2	\$75,000	\$25,000	\$2,083	\$481	\$150,000
2	\$40,000	\$13,333	\$1,111	\$256	\$80,000
3	\$20,000	\$6,667	\$556	\$128	\$60,000
5	\$10,000	\$3,333	\$278	\$64	\$50,000
8	\$5,000	\$1,667	\$139	\$32	\$40,000
11	\$2,500	\$833	\$69	\$16	\$27,500
17	\$1,250	\$417	\$35	\$8	\$21,250
26	\$650	\$332	\$18	\$6	\$16,900
38	\$350	\$117	\$10	\$2	\$13,300
58	\$200	\$67	\$6	\$1	\$11,600
Many	> \$200	> \$66	> \$6	> \$1	\$179,450

Total Gift Goal: \$800,000

Creative Ways to Grow in Your Generosity

We have all received grace upon grace through God's love in Jesus Christ. "Opening Doors" invites us all to give in response to God's grace, not out of guilt or compulsion, but as an act of worship. God pours freely into our lives, and invites us to open our hands and hearts, giving freely in ways that both challenge and surprise us.

As Jesus tells us in Matthew 10:8 - **"Freely you have received; freely give."**

And again we are reminded in 1 Peter 4:10 - **"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."**

While our faith challenges us to give freely, we live in a culture that teaches us to grip tightly to our possessions. Giving as an act of worship often invites us to give up something in one area so we can give more of ourselves in another area.

Three keys to this are:

- 1 Reassess lifestyle
- 2 Rearrange priorities
- 3 Reallocate resources



Many of God's people have been amazed at their ability to give more generously to their church than they ever imagined. The following steps may help you do this.

Practice Priority Budgeting

Consider rearranging priorities to give up something in your current budget in order to give more to God's work in this campaign. What could you sacrifice to free up resources for Opening Doors?

Redirect Present Expenditures

During the pandemic, some people are finding that money they had set aside for a vacation or another expenditure was not used due to cancelled plans. Or perhaps you will finish paying off a college loan halfway through next year, or finish making car or home loan payments. Could you redirect these funds to God's work at Our Redeemer's?

Increased Giving with Increased income

Some people receive periodic increases in salary or bonuses. The temptation for many of us is to increase our lifestyle to fit the higher income. In many instances, God's people have decided that they will commit the full amount of salary increases to God's purposes through a campaign at their church.

Give Creatively from Stored Resources

A young man decided that two collectors' baseball cards worth over \$20,000 he had been holding for a number of years would be an appropriate and meaningful sacrifice. Some families save money over a period of years for a special project. One couple had saved \$80,000 to build a lake cabin; when their church entered a generosity initiative, they decided the needs of the church were greater than their need for a second home.

Commit Unexpected Cash

Often, people pray for God to show them a way they can give beyond what they can presently see or afford. Sometimes the answers come unexpectedly. A couple had been praying for weeks about their commitment to their church's campaign. Much to their surprise, they received an inheritance of several thousand dollars. They gave the entire amount to their church as part of their commitment.

Sacrifice Extra Time

Some people have extra time they can use in a part-time job to be able to give more to the church. We also know of an individual who decided to put off retirement by one year so that he could give the extra year of income to his church for their campaign.

Donate Appreciated Assets

Gifts of appreciated assets (often investment securities or real estate) can be very advantageous to both the giver and the church.



Frequently Asked Questions

What are the Financial Goals for the “Opening Doors” Campaign?

Annual Mission Budget: \$600,000

Capital Campaign Renovation Debt: \$800,00 to eliminate mortgage

Who will participate in this campaign?

We desire full participation (100%) from members, non-members, and anyone who calls Our Redeemer’s “home.” Our leaders—staff and Council—are 100% committed to making their own pledges and participating in this campaign. We want to commit together to God’s work as one unified congregation—all of us saying “YES” to God in this season.

Why are we using pledge cards—can’t this commitment be just between “me and God”? (Or, I always give but I never fill out a pledge card—why is that so important this year?)

We make promises when something matters deeply to us. We sign contracts for cell phones, lease agreements, and marriage certificates as a way of stating our intentions. Pledge cards also help our church leaders to plan wisely and well. Together let’s make commitments to what God will do in and through Our Redeemer’s in 2021-2022 and let’s commit to paying off the mortgage in full.

What if I need to adjust my pledge in the future due to unforeseen circumstances?

You may adjust your pledge at any time by contacting our parish administrator.

Why is our church increasing its budget during such challenging times?

Because we believe God has a strong and clear call for our church to lead and serve in our community during these challenging times. We believe this goal is achievable for our congregation and have engaged outside counsel to help us wisely discern our goal. Our church has always responded generously when asked — let’s continue to do so now.



In these uncertain times, I don't feel comfortable giving money away—wouldn't it be better to save my money in case I need it?

Scripture tells us God has given us life, our abilities and personality traits, and, sometimes through inheritance, sometimes through using those gifts God has given us, we are able to earn money. Yet, Jesus taught that what we have is not our own. It still belongs to God. We've simply been entrusted with oversight of it, and to use it in ways that will delight and serve God. The Bible's starting place for doing this is to see 90% of what's in our possession as ours to live with, and then return 10% to God, by giving it to places and partners who help bring God's kingdom. This ends up being pretty amazingly joyful and rewarding! We can make such a difference, in ways we never ever imagined.

I gave a significant gift in the last campaign—do I have to do it again?

We have an incredible opportunity to answer God's call to Our Redeemer's. If you have given previously, we invite you to generously give again, knowing that the ripples of your gifts will extend even beyond your lifetime. Your gifts to fund our building campaign will live on and impact future generations.

Our budget for the building renovation increased and we had to take out a loan—why did that happen?

The road from the beginning to the end of this project has been long, and costs have risen along the way. Some costs also were not factored in originally (furnishings, permits, life-safety upgrades, etc.) and had to be accounted for. Had we not moved ahead, construction costs would have continued to rise, perhaps preventing us from completing the project. We now have a beautifully renovated, safe, accessible building that will serve our congregation and community for decades to come.



Opening Doors

Sundays in October 2021
Adult Forum Topics

Making a Way for
Gathering Neighbors -
Daily Devotionals

"Making a Way" is what God does for God's people throughout the Bible. God's people also make a way for God! Come explore how we can make ways for God through "Opening Doors".

October 3rd

Making a Way for Gathering Neighbors

Lectio Divina Study of Matthew 5: 1-15 (The Beatitudes)

Our guest presenter for the opening will be Fred Flickinger, ORLC member and musician.

October 10th

Making a Way for the Spirit's Dance

Guest Presenter: Cyndi Wolfe, "Art and the Holy Spirit"

Cyndi is a weaver and fabric artist. She has made paraments and sacramental cloths for worship settings.

Gospel lesson: Luke 1:26-38 (Annunciation)

October 11th

Making a Way for Justice to Grow

Guest Presenter: Elizabeth Dickinson, Social Justice Minister at ORLC

Gospel lesson: John 6:4-14 (Feeding 5000)

October 24th

Making a Way for Future Generations

Guest Presenters: Rev. Chelsea Globe, U.W. Campus Pastor Cindy Ege, Elementary-age teacher, ORLC member and mother

Gospel lesson: Matthew 13:44-50 (Treasure, pearl, fish)

October 31st

Making a Way for Whole-Hearted Generosity

Guest Presenters: Adam Frantz, brewer, beer specialist, ORLC member Ronda Andrews: Hospitality specialist

Gospel lesson: John 2:1-11 (the wedding in Cana miracle)

Discipleship Daily Notes

Stephanie Running

II Corinthians 9: 8- 9 "And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: 'They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.'"

Opening Doors is a giving initiative that encourages and equips the people of Our Redeemer's to wisely and generously pledge financial commitments for our mission in the coming year, and, also well into the future, through our capital campaign.

Here, in God's Holy Word in scripture, we begin. We begin with God's ability to make our efforts enough, and more than enough. God provides all that we have and all that we need. All that we have is not for ourselves alone. We are to extend God's grace to our neighbors and those in need.

We encourage you to engage with these devotionals - with your small group, your family, or on your own in quiet devotion. We pray this season in the life of Our Redeemer's will be more than just a giving initiative, but a time for each of us to deepen our faith and expand our vision for how our God is Opening Doors to the future. Let's move forward together as God's people of Our Redeemer's. Grace abounds!



Making a Way for Gathering Neighbors

It just takes a minute each day to be open to God.

Friday, October 1

A Prayer of Welcome

Oh God, you made room for me in your family. Thank you for including me. Show me how to feel at home in a newly renovated church building. There are so many changes! You do not change, God. You stay the same. Your welcome always remains. You welcome each and every person. Encourage me to be a person who welcomes other people. Grant me the opportunity to say, "Please come in and join us," because you have said that to me, and I have been glad to stay close to you. Amen.

Saturday, October 2

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me." Revelation 3:20

Upon which door(s) have you ever knocked? Who opened it?

Sunday, October 3

Lectio Divina (Bible Study)

When have you been welcomed so kindly that you remember it even now?

Read: Matthew 5:1-5

"When we pray Lectio Divina we see the words of Scripture as God's living words being spoken to our hearts in this moment." (Christine Valters Paintner, Abbey of the Arts)

1. *The blessings of the Beatitudes are not what you might expect. For example: "Blessed are you when people revile you... Rejoice and be glad..." Which of these sentences makes sense to you?*
2. *Jesus is talking about "Making a Way" even when there are obstacles. How can we turn "strangers" into "neighbors"?*
3. *Can you imagine yourself as a newcomer, entering this church for the first time? What do you need to feel welcomed?*

"A Blessing Called Sanctuary"

by Jan Richardson

([Circle of Grace](#), Wanton Gospeller Press, Orlando, Florida, 2015, pages 55-57. Reprinted with permission during the Covid-19 Pandemic.)

You hardly knew
how hungry you were
to be gathered in,
to receive the welcome
that invited you to enter
entirely--
nothing of you
found foreign or strange,
nothing of your life
that you were asked
to leave behind
or to carry in silence
or in shame.

Tentative steps
became settling in,
leaning into the blessing
that enfolded you,
taking your place
in the circle
that stunned you
with its unimagined grace.

You began to breathe again,
to move without fear,
to speak with abandon
the words you carried
in your bones,
that echoed in your being.

You learned to sing.

But the deal with this blessing
is that it will not leave you alone,
will not let you linger
in safety,
in stasis.

The time will come
when this blessing
will ask you to leave,
not because it has tired of you
but because it desires for you
to become the sanctuary
that you have found--
to speak your word into the world,
to tell what you have heard
with your own ears,
seen with your own eyes,
known in your own heart;

That you are beloved,
precious child of God,
beautiful to behold,*
and you are welcome
and more than welcome
here.

*Thanks to the Rev. Jane Wolf and the congregation of Hobson United Methodist Church in Nashville, Tennessee, for the story in which she used these words-"beloved, precious child of God, and beautiful to behold"-were offered to help transform the life of a member of their community. The story appears in THE UPPER ROOMS DISCIPLINES 1999 (Nashville: The Upper Room).

Making a Way for the Spirit's Dance

Monday, October 4

Read: Ezekiel 37: 1- 6 (from The Message Bible)

Tuesday, October 5

Read: Ezekiel 37: 7 -14

Remember to thank God for your living body, bones and all.

Wednesday, October 6

Read: Acts 2:4

"Blessing That Undoes Us"

by Jan Richardson

(Circle of Grace, Wanton Gospeller Press, 2015, pages 172-173. Reprinted with permission during the Covid-19 pandemic.)

On the day
you are wearing
your certainty
like a cloak
and your sureness
goes before you
like a shield
or like a sword,

May the sound
of God's name
spill from your lips
as you have never
heard it before.

May your knowing
be undone.

May mystery
confound your
understanding.

May the Divine
rain down
in strange syllables
yet with
an ancient familiarity,
a knowing borne
in the blood,
the ear,
the tongue,

bringing the clarity
that comes
not in stone
or in steel
but in fire,
in flame.

May there come
one searing word--
enough to bare you
to the bone,
enough to set
your heart ablaze,
enough to make you
whole again.

Thursday, October 7

A Prayer (Poem)

Lord,
if

wind is a sign of Your Spirit,
and breath a sign of Your life among us, then
let us feel more near You in the evening breezes, in storms,
and in the breath of our own bodies.

(Herbert F. Brokering, Lord, If, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis. MO, 1977, page 63)

Friday, October 8

"Action and Reaction" (A Prayer Poem)

Every action has an equal and opposite reaction. That is a fact.
Science says it is so.

Pro and con. Left and right. Heat and cold.

Ah! But is it true in my real life?

Dirt and vacuum.

Soiled laundry and then the washing machine.

Sad dog? Take her for a walk.

Boring television? Many books to read.

Boring book? Many old movies to see.

Cannot hear God's voice? Ask a question in prayer.

Is the Holy Spirit urging me to do something? Feel.

Do I hear God's voice suggesting an idea? Listen.

Look! The Spirit takes action! Now it is my turn to react.

AMEN!

Saturday, October 9

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."

(New International Version)

"First this: God created the Heavens and Earth-all you see, all you don't see. Earth was a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness, an inky blackness. God's Spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss."

(The Message Bible)

Here are two different wordings for the very first words of Bible. What advice did God have for creation? What advice would you give God if you were asked by God? Any improvements or changes?

Sunday, October 10

Read: Luke 1: 26 - 38

What word or phrase strikes you as amazing or wonderful?

Salvation (in Hebrew) means "coming out of a cramped space into wide open space." Has that ever happened to you?

Making a Way for Justice to Grow

Monday, October 11

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

Isaiah 58: 6-9a

"Then your light shall break forth like the dawn..." What does that mean to you?

Tuesday, October 12

A Prayer for Sharing

Holy God, in Kindergarten we learned that sharing is important for everyone. It seemed like a good lesson. Why is it still so hard to share sometimes? Why is it easy to look away from the needs of other people, and ignore the chance to share? Make me remember that I have plenty, and I can spare so much. It is up to you to decide who deserves to receive. It is up to me to be generous. Help me give as you have given. Thank you for giving me so much more than enough.

Amen.

Wednesday, October 13

It was nearly time for the Feast of Passover, kept annually by the Jews.

When Jesus looked out and saw that a large crowd had arrived, he said to Philip, "Where can we buy bread to feed these people?" He said this to stretch Philip's faith. He already knew what he was going to do. Philip answered, "Two hundred silver pieces wouldn't be enough to buy bread for each person to get a piece." One of the disciples—it was Andrew, brother to Simon Peter—said, "There's a little boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But that's a drop in the bucket for a crowd like this. Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." There was a nice carpet of green grass in this place. They sat down, about five thousand of them. Then Jesus took the bread and, having given thanks, gave it to those who were seated. He did the same with the fish. All ate as much as they wanted. When the people had eaten their fill, he said to his disciples, "Gather the leftovers so nothing is wasted." They went to work and filled twelve large baskets with leftovers from the five barley loaves. The people realized that God was at work among them in what Jesus had just done. They said, "This is the prophet for sure, God's prophet right here in Galilee!"

John 6: 4-14 (The Message Bible)

Did anybody share?

Thursday, October 14

A Prayer of Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Creator God, you have called us to be keepers of your earth. Through greed we have established an economy that destroys the web of life. We have changed our climate and we drown in despair. Let oceans of justice flow. May we learn to sustain and renew the life of our Mother Earth. We stand with indigenous people worldwide who are demanding restoration of their ancestral lands. We pray for our leaders, custodians of Mother Earth, that they may

negotiate with wisdom and fairness. May they act with compassion and courage; and lead us into the path of justice for the sake of our children and our children's children. Amen.

([All Creation Sings](#), page 48. "Sundays and Seasons," used by permission)

Friday, October 15

A Prayer of Pope Francis

Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live. The poor and the earth are crying out. O Lord, seize us with your power and light, help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of your kingdom of justice, peace, love, and beauty. Amen.

([All Creation Sings](#), page 48. "Sundays and Seasons," used by permission)

Saturday, October 16

A Prayer: Prejudice and Racism

O God, you form all humanity to bear your divine image, and you intend for everyone to live together in harmonious dignity. We pray for all people, whether ourselves or others, who suffer the cruelties of racial or ethnic prejudice. Grant your Spirit of power to all who are oppressed. Give healing to victims of violence, protection to the vulnerable and abused, better housing and worthy employment to the mistreated, courage to the fearful, a remedy for rage, strength to parents and caregivers, and hope to children and youth. Purge the privileged of their sense of superiority, and lead the church and society to foster communities of equity and diversity; through Jesus Christ, our loving Savior. Amen.

([All Creation Sings](#), page 50. "Sundays and Seasons," used by permission)

Sunday, October 17

The Jewish Passover Festival was near. When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!" Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten. After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world."

John 6: 4-14

Have you ever had a similar experience - been in need but then - SURPRISE! - your need has been met?

Prayer: Mighty and merciful God, lover of justice and equity, you call us to support the weak, to help those who suffer, and to honor all people. By the power of your Holy Spirit, make us advocates for your justice and instruments of your peace, so that all may be reconciled in your beloved community, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

([All Creation Sings](#), page 47, "Sundays and Seasons," used by permission)

Making a Way for Future Generations

Monday, October 18

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."

Jeremiah 29: 11 - 14

What is God calling OUR REDEEMER'S to in the next phase?

Tuesday, October 19

"God's Work, Our Hands"

God's work, our hands: working together, building a future, repairing the world, ...following Jesus to places unknown, walking as friends, marching for freedom running the race with God's future the goal...praising, proclaiming to all who will hear, praying for peace, shouting for justice...gifted by grace, we respond in God's love... Bless, God our hands as we work in your name, sharing the good news of your gospel.

(AH Creation Sings, Hymn 1000, "Songs and Seasons," used by permission)

Wednesday, October 20

What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building. By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 3: 5 - 12

Has God given you growth?

Thursday, October 21

People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.

Luke 18: 15-17

This reminds me of the story of a pastor telling the children about the First Christmas. "...And there were angels singing. Shepherds and sheep were near the stable. Mary and baby Jesus and Joseph were there. Above the stable there was something big and bright and shiny. What do you think it was?" And a child said, "A rocket ship!" Our future belongs to such as these.

How do you feel about that?

Friday, October 22

God's kingdom is like a treasure hidden in a field for years and then accidentally found by a trespasser. The finder is ecstatic-what a find!-and proceeds to sell everything he owns to raise money to buy that field. Or, God's kingdom is like a jewel merchant on the hunt for excellent pearls. Finding one that is flawless, he immediately sells everything and buys it. Or, God's kingdom is like a fishnet cast into the sea, catching all kinds of fish. When it is full, it is hauled onto the beach. The good fish are picked out and put in a tub; those unfit to eat are thrown away. That's how it will be when the curtain comes down on history. The angels will come and cull the bad fish and throw them in the garbage. There will be a lot of desperate complaining, but it won't do any good.

Matthew 13: 44- 50 (The Message Bible)

Look what is happening around you today and see if you find something else as an example of God's kingdom.

Saturday, October 23

"Come and Seek the Ways of Wisdom"

Come and seek the ways of Wisdom, she who danced when earth was new, follow closely what she teaches, for her words are right and true. Wisdom clears the path to justice, showing us what love must do.

Sister Wisdom, come, assist us; nurture all who seek rebirth. Spirit-guide and close companion, bring to light our sacred worth. Free us to become your people, holy friends of God and earth.

(Ruth Duck, [All Creation Sings](#), Hymn 971, "Songs and Seasons," used by permission)

Sunday, October 24

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 13: 44 - 50

What do you value most?

Holy God, you have plans for us. Plans for good and not harm. Show us what we should value; who we should value. Let us seek you with our whole hearts. Guide us into a future of your choosing, even if we do not know every step of the way. Help us to trust in you. Grant us the faith we need. Thank you for leading us, together, with our sisters and brothers in Christ Jesus into your kingdom. Amen.

Making a Way for Whole-hearted Generosity

Monday, October 25

And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

2 Corinthians 8: 1- 7

Have you ever been surprised by the generosity of someone else?

Tuesday, October 26

A Prayer: Faithful Living in Society

"God, our gracious giver, your Son Jesus taught us that where our treasure is there our hearts will be also. Teach us to love people more than money, relationships more than things, and you above all, that the way we live will reflect what we truly value and believe. We ask this in the name of Jesus, who emptied himself in love for us, and now reigns with you and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen."

(All Creation Sings, page 50, "Songs and Seasons," used by permission)

We receive from God. What does God receive from us?

Wednesday, October 27

I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

And here is my judgment about what is best for you in this matter. Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality, as it is written: "The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little."

2 Corinthians 8: 8-15

Have you ever been surprised by your generosity?

Thursday, October 28

A Prayer (Poem)

Lord,
if
You are so known and honored for giving, healing, and
restoring hope,
then
I can increase my will to give,
my trust in others,
my feeling for enemies,
and my imagination for a torn world.

(Herbert F. Brokering, *Lord, If*, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO, 1977, page 35)

Friday, October 29

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: "They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever."^[a]

2 Corinthians 9: 8 - 9

When you give a gift to someone you love, how does that make you feel?

When you receive a gift from someone who loves you, how do you feel?

Is generosity defined by what you have, or what you are willing to give away?

Saturday, October 30

A Generous Nature: The Woodpecker

Every spring we hear the rapid tapping of woodpeckers on trees. To make a louder noise, they will pound on metal parts of telephone poles and housetops. They are calling for mates. A male woodpecker must entice a mate by digging a nest hole in a tree that she cannot resist. If it is not good enough, he will have to try another tree and another hole. Last year's holes are no good for this year's romance. The old holes are left for other creatures. Many other birds use an old woodpecker hole to build a nest. Squirrels, chipmunks, and raccoons can use woodpecker holes. Woodpeckers do not collapse or destroy their old nest holes. They could do that. But the woodpeckers are generous with what they have and what they have made.

Can I become as generous as a wild woodpecker?

Sunday, October 31

REFORMATION SUNDAY and GENEROSITY SUNDAY

Read: John 2: 1-11

If you were a character in this story what question(s) would you ask?

Does any element of this story show generosity?

What do you notice in the interaction of Jesus and his mother?

**Will you join us in the “Opening Doors”
campaign to ensure that our mortgage is
paid off in 3 years, and the ministries at Our
Redeemer’s are fully funded next year?**

**Together, let’s pledge boldly so we can share
the love of Jesus in our community in new
ways, no matter what the future holds.**

