



**Redeemer Guide**



About Redeemer



How Can I Get Involved



Ministries

Dear Friend,

I'm glad you have joined us today and I hope that you have been made to feel welcome.

Redeemer is large and it is easy for visitors to feel overwhelmed. In order to help you feel more at home we have prepared this guide. It will give you basic information about the church, our purpose and our vision for ministry. We hope that this information will help you get to know us better and that, in turn, we can get to know you better.

Perhaps you would like to get involved with the Redeemer community immediately. Perhaps you would prefer to take your time and get a feel for the way the church operates. Maybe you have no interest in church activities at all, but are curious about why a church such as Redeemer is in New York City. Naturally, we cannot cover every topic in this short guide, but we have tried to give you a clear idea of church life at Redeemer. We hope you will find most of your questions answered; we may even give answers to questions you had not thought of asking. We hope that the information in this guide will encourage you to continue joining us for worship and to get involved in one or more of Redeemer's ministries.

We hope to see you again. Please let us know if you have any questions regarding spiritual matters. We will be glad to speak to you.

In Him,



Tim Keller



### Redeemer's Vision

**As a church of Jesus Christ, Redeemer exists to help build a great city for all people through a movement of the gospel that brings personal conversion, community formation, social justice and cultural renewal to New York City and, through it, to the world.**

**A church of Jesus Christ.** Our identity. We serve the city and our members through the true preaching of the Word of God as well as the right administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. How we understand 'true' and 'right' is found in the ancient creeds of the church (e.g., Apostles', Nicene) and the Protestant Reformed confessions (e.g., Westminster Confession and catechisms).

**To help build a great city for all people.** Our aspiration. Based on Jeremiah 29:7 we seek to love our God and neighbors by partnering with others to bring about a city that is a thriving and good place for all to live.

**A movement of the gospel.** Our dynamic. The gospel is a living thing that grows and sweeps us along with it. The gospel is both the power for and shaping factor of all we do (Romans 1:16; Galatians 2:14). From the gospel flow our core values, spelled out below.

The facets or "fronts" of Redeemer's ministry are the main organizational manifestation of our core values. We call them facets or fronts because each is an aspect of the whole, and this means that, while each front specializes in expressing certain values, everyone must carry out their ministry giving attention to all of them. So, for example, worship ministry must consider how to conduct their ministry with reference to social justice, and mercy ministry and faith-work must keep evangelism in mind.

- *Personal conversion.* We connect people to God through worship, evangelism and discipleship since the whole life is converted and changed by the gospel.
- *Community formation.* We connect people to each other through worship, community group fellowship, sharing of resources, strengthening families, as well as being a counter-culture with regard to sex, money, and power.
- *Social justice.* We connect people to the poor and marginalized through ministries of justice and compassion, and to the whole city through the civic involvement of our people.
- *Cultural renewal.* We connect people to the culture, particularly through the integration of faith with work and vocation.
- *Movement.* We plant churches in cities that share these core values. The term "movement" means the proliferation of gospel-based churches, ministries, institutions, companies, and initiatives throughout the city.

## About Redeemer > Redeemer's Values



**Through it, the world.** New York City is an enormous mission field, and it is tempting to let its importance and needs fill our entire field of attention. But Redeemer has from the beginning seen its mission extending to the other great global cities of the world, where we partner with national leaders to plant churches and gospel movements. City to City is our means for accomplishing this.

## Redeemer's Values

### What We Believe and Practice

Summary: Redeemer is committed to the **Gospel**—A body of truth and a dynamic spiritual power that changes everything; **City**—There is no better place for Christians to live and serve than the great global cities of the world; **Movement**—We want to catalyze a whole movement of the gospel that renews the city. There are nine values that guide us.

### 1. Gospel Centrality

In general, the gospel is the message of the Bible that God is redeeming his fallen creation through the coming of his kingdom in the person and work of Jesus Christ. In particular, the gospel is the message that we are saved from our sins by sheer, free grace through faith in the finished work of Christ, not through our efforts and works. Redeemer believes that this gospel message of hope for the world and grace for the sinner is not merely a body of truth, but the very power of God which grows, changes, and shapes everything with which it has contact—hearts and identities, relationships, practices in every area of public and private life, and whole societies. So the gospel is “central,” first, because it is not merely one department of belief, but it is a power that affects every area of life when its implications are felt and thought out. But secondly, the gospel is “central” because it is neither legalism on the one hand nor relativism on the other.

### 2. Changed Lives

It is common to think the gospel is a message mainly to be shared with non-believers to bring them salvation, after which they grow through following Biblical principles. But at Redeemer we believe the gospel is a message for believers also—that believing, understanding, rejoicing in and practicing the gospel more deeply is the main way believers overcome flaws and problems and grow into Christ-likeness. Our sinful behavior is rooted in idols of the heart—alternative ‘salvations’—and deeper knowledge of and experience of God’s grace in Christ can change them. We know that long-term life change also requires formative practices of individual and communal prayer, instruction, and worship (see Gospel Community), but without a gospel-changed and changing heart, church practices will produce nominal believers. The gospel changes us from the inside out, freeing us from both self-righteousness and self-condemnation, enabling us to

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welcome people we excluded, including those who don't share our beliefs. Bringing the gospel to bear on life is therefore the essence of what we do in preaching, pastoral care, counseling, and education. The gospel can change anyone at all, and we take special delight in testimonies of its powerful work.

### **3. Gospel Community**

Because the gospel changes our hearts and identities, it makes us into people who can conduct far more transparent, honest, intimate, and loving relationships. So the gospel creates a new kind of community. And, the nature of the gospel is best conveyed and made plain in community because it is just as true that the gospel is not only a body of truth but also a life-changing power. Growth in gospel grace (discipleship) is best done in a community of informal relationships, not in a classroom or through a book. It is in community that people see how a gospel-changed heart really works—in our humility as well as our boldness; in our quickness to repent, forgive, and reconcile; and in the uniqueness of our life practices. The gospel does not merely make us closer in our one-on-one relationships, but also creates a counter-culture, a contrast community in which all can see the difference the gospel makes. The gospel, then, in multiple ways leads us to prize community and we aim to, whenever possible, do things through organic community and lay ministry rather than through staff-led programs. There are multiple ways to form community, but in urban settings the small group fellowship will continue to be crucial to it.

### **4. City Vision**

At Redeemer we hold a positive, balanced, Biblically-rooted view of the city. We are very positive about the city—seeing it as perhaps the most strategic place for Christians to live and minister today, and also valuing its many benefits for human life and flourishing. As a result, we encourage Christians to stay and live in the city (though not legalistically). We want our leaders to be energized by and enjoy city living. We call this positive regard 'balanced' because Redeemer is contextualized to the city. To contextualize means to be adapted to a culture without compromising the truth, as Jesus was incarnated (fully human) yet without sin. The gospel makes us contextualizers--too humbled to make an idol out of our old culture, but too affirmed and loved to need the approval of the new one. So we are very concerned to be urban rather than suburban in our sensibilities and communication; nonetheless we do not romanticize the city or uncritically adopt attitudes and practices that contradict the gospel. We don't hate the city or romanticize it—we love the city, we have a vision for what it could be, and we are here to seek its well being for all its people.

### **5. Mercy and Justice**

The gospel humbles people with means and power, showing them that they are no better than anyone else before God. It also lifts up the

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poor and broken, giving them a new identity and confidence in Christ. While concern for the needy is in no way a means of salvation, a life poured out in deeds of mercy and justice is a sign that the heart has been changed by grace. We use both terms. Mercy is simply meeting people's basic needs out of a gospel-produced compassion. Doing justice includes being generous in sharing one's wealth and time in meeting immediate needs, but it consists also in being advocates for people with less social power, and more broadly, engaging as citizens in the city in order to make it a good place for all people to live. A gospel-preaching church should be famous for its mercy and justice, or outsiders will not listen to what is being preached. While bringing people to faith in Christ is the single greatest thing you can do for someone, the gospel must be ministered in word and deed together if it is going to have the life-changing impact we desire.

### **6. Cultural Renewal**

The gospel does not only have implications for our private life and Christian relationships. It also affects our public life, particularly how we pursue our vocations in the world and do our daily work. Any particular culture is largely the result of a society's core beliefs about the meaning of life, right and wrong, the nature of the human dilemma and its solution—all fleshed out and expressed through people's work and the things they produce. When Christians begin to do their work out of a different set of beliefs—whether in business, the arts, the academy, government, or the helping professions—it changes and renews the culture. The gospel gives every believer a new worldview, new inner motives and power, and new conceptions and guidelines for work. While the local church does not directly seek to change culture, it discipled its people to be agents out in the world who do.

### **7. Outward Face**

Redeemer has always been especially concerned to welcome the secular, non-believing Manhattanite. Most churches have an ethos within that is confusing or offensive to everyone but evangelicals. Redeemer has always sought to be a place where doubters felt their questions were noticed and taken seriously. This is one of the reasons why we have always avoided typical Christian piety-jargon that makes outsiders immediately feel unnecessarily alien. Sermons should be preached, and public events (even most small groups) conducted as if non-Christians were present, over-hearing what we are saying. We must constantly keep in mind what is like to not believe. If we maintain such an environment, then evangelism shall happen the right way—not so much through programs but organically through the witness of Redeemer believers. It is crucial that a large percentage of Christians come into Redeemer and think, "I wish my non-Christian friend could hear this." While Redeemer will always grow by attracting already-Christians in, that is not our intended way to grow, and a strong outward face will guarantee that newly arrived Christians are mobilized to reach out to the city.



### 8. Gospel Movement

Redeemer is a local church, but we want to be one of the catalysts for an entire movement of the gospel in our city and in the other great cities of the world. A movement is a dynamic set of interactive relationships between renewed churches, new churches, a variety of specialist ministries (that unite congregations and lay people to do prayer, evangelism, youth and college ministries, faith and work projects, and mercy and justice) as well as many other new institutions, non-profits, arts initiatives, organizations, and companies. In a true movement, common vision and a spirit of innovation and cooperation characterize the relationships of these entities. Then the relationships stimulate all parties and the overall the Body of Christ in a city grows faster than the population—without a central, top-down, control center. Lots of new ministries and churches are begun, and churches overall see conversions and changed lives. A movement also requires a host of institutions, such as schools and theological training centers, which support family life in the city and raises up leaders. A movement requires above all a 'kingdom' (rather than a tribal) mindset on the part of the Christians of the city, produced (as usual!) by a grasp of the gospel of grace and the Biblical theology on which it is based.

### 9. Church Planting

We believe that at the heart of the heart of any gospel movement in a city is church planting. On the one hand, we know that church planting is not everything that is needed. Existing churches must be renewed with the gospel. Christians must evangelize, do justice, and integrate their faith with their work. Educational institutions and arts initiatives and many non-profits must be started. And yet the best way to renew older churches and increase the number of Christians, ministers, and givers in a city is to plant new churches. This is a high priority of Redeemer. We have no illusions that our single church or our Presbyterian tradition is sufficient to renew all of New York City. We are therefore committed to planting (and helping others plant) hundreds of new churches, while at the same time working for a renewal of gospel vitality in all the congregations of the city.

For more information regarding Redeemer's vision, including sermons on the topic, please visit [www.redeemer.com/vision](http://www.redeemer.com/vision).

## About Redeemer > Redeemer's History

In early 1989 a group of 15 people began meeting weekly in an Upper East Side apartment. Their purpose was to pray about starting a new church in the heart of Manhattan for professional New Yorkers. One of their concerns was that new believers were finding it difficult to locate a church they could attend, a church that was open to people who were seeking answers regarding their faith, and where they felt secure in bringing their friends who were skeptical about matters of faith. Because Dr. Timothy Keller had already been designated by the Mission to North America Committee of the Presbyterian Church in America to investigate the needs of New York City and the possibility of church planting here, he began meeting with this prayer group.

Although Dr. Keller's schedule was already full due to his teaching commitments at Westminster Theological Seminary, he continued commuting to New York regularly to meet with the prayer group to discuss the possibilities of church development with them. Before long, as Dr. Keller learned more about the spiritual needs of New York City, he began to feel a call here.

By the spring of 1989, this movement had taken on such urgency that an evening service was begun on April 9, 1989, at the Church of the Advent Hope, which was home to a Seventh-Day Adventist congregation. In June the Kellers moved to New York with their three young boys. By the end of the summer the congregation had grown to such an extent that the decision was made to add another service. A morning service featuring classical music and a more liturgical form of worship was added on September 24, 1989. By Christmas, attendance at the church numbered approximately 250; by its first anniversary Redeemer had added three staff members to work in administration, small groups and Christian education.

### 1993

While no one had doubted God's direction in establishing a new church in Manhattan, neither had anyone expected an authentic revival. But so it seemed. New believers were being added weekly, skeptics were thronging to the services, every decision seemed blessed, and God provided for every need, sometimes before we even knew we had it. By early spring of 1993, Redeemer had outgrown the Adventist Church, even though it was holding four services each Sunday in a building that seated nearly 400. With extraordinary timing, Hunter College Auditorium became available and we moved our services there in March of 1993.

From its first morning worship service, Redeemer has grown to a Sunday attendance of approximately 5000 per week, although it would be more accurate to say that there are about double that number who attend on a regular basis. Sunday services are held in different locations around the city and many ministries have been developed to address human needs in the city. In 1992 Redeemer founded Hope for New York, an outward-facing mercy ministry focused on addressing the practical needs of the city's population.

Since 1993, Redeemer has not only continued to grow as a congregation, but has also begun working to plant churches in and around New York as well as supporting church-planting efforts in other global cities. In 1996 Redeemer decided to become a multi-site church rather than continue growing in one location into a "mega-church." This model was formed around the idea of setting up worship service sites for four (later, three) distinct congregations around Central Park instead of one large congregation meeting at Hunter College.



## About Redeemer > Redeemer's History

### 1997

In the autumn of 1997, Redeemer concluded its first Capital Campaign and used the funds to initiate the development of the multi-site model and to found the Redeemer Church Planting Center.

From 1993 to 2006 Redeemer planted daughter churches throughout the New York Metro area. The first two were in Greenwich Village (The Village Church) and Rye, New York (Trinity Presbyterian.) In partnership with others, New Song Fellowship in Harlem and North Shore Presbyterian in Oyster Bay, Long Island were established. Since its founding in 1998 the Redeemer Church Planting Center has provided resources, including financing, mentoring, leadership and ministers, for these and many other church plants. Other daughter/granddaughter/sister churches planted include: the Teaneck, Hoboken, and Montclair churches in New Jersey, Grace Church in Palo Alto California, and Harbour Church in San Diego. Church plants in cities outside the U.S. include Toronto, Budapest, Sao Paulo and London.

### 2003

By fall of 2003, the development of Redeemer's multi-site model had taken shape with an East Side location for AM and PM congregations and two separate West Side sites for a morning and evening congregation.

By fall of 2004 Sunday attendance averaged approximately 4200 people at four services weekly and the need to purchase property became unavoidable. So Redeemer conducted a Vision Campaign in the fall of 2005, the theme of which was "Serving our neighbors, changing the world." Funds were raised to start new community-for-formation ministries, enable more churches to be planted, and to purchase property in Manhattan for the purpose of building Redeemer's first Community and Worship Center.

The Vision campaign resulted in pledges of \$19.2 million and at the end of 2006 Redeemer entered into contract to purchase a property at 150 West 83rd Street. In addition, several ministries have been started or grown as a direct result. The Center for Faith & Work has expanded—most significantly, by launching comprehensive professional development ministries for artists (The Arts Greenhouse), entrepreneurs (The Entrepreneurship Initiative) and an extensive mentorship program for young professionals (Gotham Fellows). In addition, the Redeemer Church Planting Center nearly doubled the total number of churches it helped start worldwide through the help of funding from this campaign.

### 2007

In March of 2007 Redeemer grew from four to five worship services (offering an additional West Side evening service) and Sunday worship attendance increased to approximately 4800. And by the end of 2008, congregation wide involvement in weekly fellowship groups had increased dramatically more than doubling in a three year span to approximately 3,000 congregants who were involved in weekly Bible study and fellowship.

### 2011

In 2011 Redeemer began the process of transitioning from one centrally staffed church into three congregations, each with it's own lead Pastor and local staff, with the launch of the East Side congregation in October of 2011. In March, 2012 the RENEW Campaign funds designated for building a new worship facility came to fruition as

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Redeemer opened its first building in Manhattan, the W83 Ministry Center at 150 W. 83rd St. The West Side congregation was launched in this new space at the same time. The W83 Ministry Center also provides all three congregations with ministry space to serve the city and our church community in ways that were not possible in rented space.

In October of 2012 the Downtown congregation was launched and has averaged over 1000 people in worship attendance in its first year. By the end of 2012 Redeemer had multiplied into three generative congregations around the city. While it remains one centrally governed church body, the dynamic of the church has become more engaged in neighborhoods located east, west and south of Central Park. As three "sister" congregations united by our preaching, under Dr. Keller's senior leadership, each congregation is serving its neighborhood more distinctively and on a deeper, more transforming level.

### Today and in the Future

In 2013 Redeemer held eight Sunday worship services each week averaging over 5300 people in attendance. Each congregation is now working to strengthen ministries and raise up more leaders with the hope that the three congregations will eventually multiply further into six to nine neighborhood-based congregations within the next eight to ten years. We hope this will bring about:

- Long-term community development in NYC that transforms poor communities into prospering mixed income neighborhoods.
- New university graduates who receive training and mentoring in integrating their faith and work.
- Affordable high-quality day care and after-school programs encouraging families to stay in the city long term.
- Neighborhoods across the city openly welcoming and embracing the presence of Christian churches.
- Churches that are resourced by world-class experts from agencies in faith and work, social justice, evangelism and community building.
- Churches that are using gospel-based resources designed to change hearts and form new communities of believing individuals united in serving their cities with the love and hope of Christ.

## Tim & Kathy Keller

Tim Keller was born in 1950, the oldest of three children, in Allentown, PA. His father was an art teacher who eventually went into advertising, and his mother was a nurse. He grew up playing the trumpet and became so accomplished that he was first chair in trumpet at Bucknell University (from which he graduated in 1972) although he was a religion major. While he was at Bucknell, Tim often played in the pit orchestra for various musical productions and became so familiar with the productions that even today he can still recite the complete dialogue and lyrics to many of them. Try him some time on *The Music Man* or *Man of La Mancha*.

Although Kathy and Tim met when she was visiting her sister, who also attended Bucknell and was a friend of Tim's, they didn't get to know each other until both arrived at Gordon-Conwell Theological

## About Redeemer > Tim & Kathy Keller

Seminary. During their courtship, while driving the 12 hours together to and from Gordon-Conwell Seminary, Tim would often entertain Kathy by doing entire Stan Freberg routines, in addition to reciting the musicals.

Tim and Kathy married in 1975, in January of their final year, and both graduated Summa Cum Laude, Tim with a Master of Divinity degree and Kathy with a Master of Arts in Theological Studies. After graduation, Tim expected to be unemployed for a while so both he and Kathy took the civil service exam and prepared for life as postal carriers! However, at the last minute a call came for Tim to be the three-month interim pastor at West Hopewell Presbyterian Church in Hopewell, Virginia. They stayed for nine years. During this time they had three sons, David, Michael, and Jonathan, and Tim earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from Westminster Theological Seminary (WTS).

During that time they saw the church grow from 90 to over 300. Also during this time, Tim was the director of church planting for Mid-Atlantic Presbytery, overseeing the planting of about 15 churches.

The family moved to the Philadelphia area in 1984, when Tim joined the faculty at WTS as a part-time Professor of Practical Theology. The other part of his job was serving on the staff of Mission to North America, as the first (and only) Director of Mercy Ministry. Out of this experience he wrote his first book, *Ministries of Mercy* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishers.) More recent books include *The Reason for God*, *Prodigal God*, *Counterfeit Gods*, *Generous Justice*, *Jesus the King* (formerly *King's Cross*), *The Meaning of Marriage*, *Center Church*, *Every Good Endeavor*, *The Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness*, *Walking With God Through Pain and Suffering* and *Encounters with Jesus*.

Halfway through his time at WTS, Tim was approached by Terry Gyger, who at that time was the Director of Mission to North America, about planting a church in Manhattan. Unwilling to break his contract with WTS, Tim nevertheless agreed to network, research demographics, and recruit someone who would plant the church. Tim's growing sense of his call to serve in New York was made stronger when all his likely candidates fell through. It became obvious that Tim and Kathy were being called to go to Manhattan themselves. In June of 1989 the family moved to the city, and on September 24, 1989, Redeemer held its first morning service.

Living in New York has taught the Keller family a few lessons. "Contrary to our fears, actually my fears," says Kathy, "New York City turned out to be the best place in the world to raise children. All three of our sons are profoundly grateful to have been raised here and will tell you so at great length."

"Also," she adds, "there's no such thing as paying too much money for a comfortable pair of walking shoes."

Tim considers New York City his hobby as well as his home and his ministry. He can often be spotted on his day off, walking through neighborhoods new to him with a guidebook and a map. He claims that he can fall back on a career as a tour guide or taxi driver, should he ever be fired from Redeemer. Kathy and Tim can't imagine ever wanting to be anywhere else (though they do love their vacation weeks at the Carolina beaches!).

# How Can I... > Know God



## What is Christianity?

Some say it is a philosophy, others an ethical stance. Still others claim it is actually an experience. None of these descriptions really get to the heart of the matter, however. Each is something a Christian has, but not one of them serves as a definition of what a Christian is. Christianity has at its core a transaction between a person and God. A person who becomes a Christian moves from knowing about God distantly to knowing about him directly and intimately. Christianity is knowing God.

“Now this is eternal life; that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” — John 17:3

## Why do I need to know God?

Our desire for personal knowledge of God is strong, but we usually fail to recognize that desire for what it is. When we first fall in love, when we first marry, when we finally break into our chosen field, when we at last get that weekend house — these break-throughs arouse in us anticipation of something that, as it turns out, never occurs. We eventually discover that our desire for that precious something is a longing no lover or career or achievement, even the best possible ones, can ever satisfy. The satisfaction fades even as we close our fingers around our goal. Nothing delivers the joy it seemed to promise. Many of us avoid the yawning emptiness through busyness or denial, but at best there is just a postponement. “Nothing tastes,” said Marie Antoinette.

## There are several ways to respond to this:

**By blaming the things themselves** — by finding fault in everyone and everything around you. You believe that a better spouse, a better career, a better boss or salary would finally yield the elusive joy. Many of the most successful people of the world are like this — bored, discontented, running from new thing to new thing, often changing counselors, mates, partners, or settings. Another response is to blame yourself — by trying harder to live up to standards. Many people believe they have made poor choices or have failed to measure up to challenges and to achieve the things that would give them joy and satisfaction. Such people are wracked with self-doubts and tend to burn themselves out. They think, “If only I could reach my goals, then this emptiness would be gone.” But it is not so.

**By blaming the universe itself** — by giving up seeking fulfillment at all. This is the person who says, “Yes, when I was young I was idealistic, but at my age I have stopped howling after the moon.”

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This makes you cynical. You decide to repress that part of yourself that once wanted fulfillment and joy. But you become hard, and you can feel yourself losing your humanity, compassion, and joy.

Last, and more rarely, one can recognize that it is separation from God that is the problem — by seeing that the emptiness comes from your separation from God, and by establishing a personal relationship with him.

In order to form a personal relationship with God, you must know three things:

### **Who We Are**

*God's creation.* God created us and built us for a relationship with him. We belong to him, and we owe him gratitude for every breath, every moment, every thing. Because humans were built to live for him (to worship), we will always try to worship something — if not God, we will choose some other object of ultimate devotion to give our lives meaning.

*Sinners.* We have all chosen (and re-affirm daily) to reject God and to make our own joy and happiness our highest priority. We do not want to worship God and surrender ourselves as master, yet we are built to worship, so we cling to idols, centering our lives on things that promise to give us meaning: success, relationships, influence, love, comfort, and so on.

*In spiritual bondage.* To live for anything else but God leads to breakdown and decay. When a fish leaves the water, which he was built for, he is not free, but dead. Worshipping other things besides God leads to a loss of meaning. If we achieve these things, they cannot deliver satisfaction, because they were never meant to be “gods.” They were never meant to replace God. Worshipping other things besides God also leads to self-image problems. We end up defining ourselves in terms of our achievement in these things. We must have them or all is lost; so they drive us to work too hard, or they fill us with terror if they are jeopardized.

### **Who God Is**

*Love and justice.* His active concern is for our joy and well-being. Most people love those who love them, yet God loves and seeks the good even of people who are his enemies. But because God is good and loving, he cannot tolerate evil. The opposite of love is not anger, but indifference. “The more you love your son, the more you hate in him the liar, the drunkard, the traitor,” (E. Gifford). To imagine God's situation, imagine a judge who is also a father, who sits at the trial of

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his guilty son. A judge knows he cannot let his son go, for without justice no society can survive. How much less can a loving God merely ignore or suspend justice for us – who are loved, yet guilty of rebellion against his loving authority?

*Jesus Christ.* Jesus is God himself come to Earth. He first lived a perfect life, loving God with all his heart, soul, and mind, fulfilling all human obligation to God. He lived the life you owed – a perfect record. Then, instead of receiving his deserved reward (eternal life), Jesus gave his life as a sacrifice for our sins, taking the punishment and death each of us owed. When we believe in him: 1. our sins are paid for by his death, and 2. his perfect life record is transferred to our account. So God accepts and regards us as if we have done all Christ has done.

### **What You Must Do**

*Repent.* There first must be an admission that you have been living as your own master, worshipping the wrong things, violating God's loving laws. "Repentance" means you ask forgiveness and turn from that stance with a willingness to live for and center on him.

*Believe.* Faith is transferring your trust from your own efforts to the efforts of Christ. You were relying on other things to make you acceptable, but now you consciously begin relying on what Jesus did for your acceptance with God. All you need is ...nothing. If you think, "God owes me something for all my efforts," you are still on the outside.

*Pray in this fashion:* "I see I am more flawed and sinful than I ever dared believe, but that I am even more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I turn from my old life of living for myself. I have nothing in my record to merit Your approval, but I now rest in what Jesus did and ask to be accepted into God's family for his sake." When you make this transaction, two things happen at once: 1. your accounts are cleared, your sins are wiped out permanently, you are adopted legally into God's family and 2. the Holy Spirit enters your heart and begins to change you into the character of Jesus.

*Follow through.* Tell a Christian friend about your commitment. Get training in the basic disciplines of prayer, worship, Bible study, and fellowship with other Christians. You can contact our church office at (212) 808-4460 and we will be eager to connect you with someone who can help you begin to grow as a Christian.



# How Can I... > Know God



## Why Should I seek God?

On the one hand, you may feel that you “need” him. Even though you may recognize that you have needs only God can meet, you must not try to use him to achieve your own ends. It is not possible to bargain with God. (“I’ll do this if you will do that.”) That is not Christianity at all, but a form of magic or paganism in which you “appease” the cranky deity in exchange for a favor. Are you getting into Christianity to serve God, or to get God to serve you? Those are two opposite motives and they result in two different religions. You must come to God because 1. you owe it to him to give him your life (because he is your creator) and 2. you are deeply grateful to him for sacrificing his son (because he is your redeemer).

On the other hand, you may feel no need or interest to know God at all. This does not mean you should stay uncommitted. If you were created by God, then you owe him your life, whether you feel like it or not. You are obligated to seek him and ask him to soften your heart, open your eyes, and enlighten you. If you say, “I have no faith,” that is no excuse either. You need only doubt your doubts. No one can doubt everything at once – one must believe in something to doubt something else. For example, do you believe you are competent to run your own life? Where is the evidence of that? Why doubt everything but your doubts about God and your faith in yourself? Is that fair? You owe it to God to seek him. Do so.

## What if I’m not ready to proceed?

Make a list of the issues that you perceive to be barriers to your crossing the line into faith. Here is a possible set of headings:

### **Content issues**

Do you understand the basics of the Christian message – sin, Jesus as God, sacrifice, and faith?

### **Coherence issues**

Are there intellectual problems you have with Christianity? Are there objections to the Christian faith that you cannot resolve in your own mind?

### **Cost issues**

Do you perceive that a move into full Christian faith will cost you dearly? What fears do you have about commitment?

Try talking to a mature Christian about these issues, perhaps an officer after a service. Consider reading: *Mere Christianity*, by C.S. Lewis; and *Basic Christianity*, by John Stott.

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## How Can I... > Join A Community Group



If the Sunday Worship Services at Redeemer form the “body” of the church, Community Groups are the “heart.” Walking into Redeemer for the first time can be a little intimidating. How do you begin to get connected? How can you keep from feeling lost in the crowd? No matter how challenging and inspiring you find the sermons, or how invigorated you are by the worship, you can still feel unsatisfied and somewhat left out if you don’t build personal relationships here.

That is where Community Groups come in. It is within these groups that we experience the deep community that the church has to offer. Community Groups are where people are known and are cared for.

Composed of six to twelve people, the groups meet in homes and offices throughout the city. The typical meeting engages members in fellowship, worship, bible study, sharing and prayer. While most groups meet weekly, schedules vary according to each group.

Community Groups are led by Redeemer members who receive training and regular support from the church staff and other leaders. Many groups are co-ed with a healthy blend of ethnicities and ages; there are specialized groups as well. Included in this mix are groups for men only, women only, moms, families, artists and musicians.

As primary Christian communities, Community Groups are the place where people can practice the teachings regarding gospel living and community building. Group members are encouraged not to be merely consumers who attend only to be refreshed and restored themselves, but to find ways to serve others as well. Members learn how to support and uphold each other, how to hold each other accountable, and how to be gracious in receiving and giving exhortation so that each of them can experience the transforming power of God in all its fullness. As we are sharpened and strengthened in faith by fellow Christians, we can better reflect the love of Jesus Christ.

Community Groups are foundational to the life at Redeemer. Because of this, belonging to a group is the way to belong to Redeemer. Our hope is that everyone who attends our church will be involved in a Community Group.

For more information, visit [www.redeemer.com/cg](http://www.redeemer.com/cg).

## How Can I... > Become A Member



Although becoming a member of Redeemer is not a prerequisite for participation in our congregation or ministries, it is the best way to be a genuine part of the church. We believe that membership at Redeemer is a privilege and invite you to consider joining our covenant community.

Membership in a church is not like membership in a social club or other organization. Most organizations exist to serve their members. The church of Christ is a completely different community — one in which members seek to serve others. At Redeemer, we take seriously that we are a church not for ourselves but for others.

One of the primary reservations many people have about joining any church is, “If I’m already a member of the Body of Christ, why do I need to join a church?” The fact is that although all believers are members of the church as an organism — the Spiritual Body of Christ — it is only by a public promise that anyone can be a part of the church as an organization. The benefits of such vary widely, but included among them is the fact that you receive the care of, and the accountability to, spiritual leaders. Just as you are making a public commitment to support your fellow members, they have made the same commitment to support you. By formally joining the church, you cease to be an independent Christian and become, instead, part of a community.

Your public vows in joining the church serve as a powerful reminder that you are not ashamed to identify with Christ or his people as you openly demonstrate the reality of the Body of Christ. Membership also gives you the right to participate in shaping the ministry of the congregation, allowing you to be part of a stronger, more unified effort of God’s people. While Redeemer does not require membership before allowing you to be a part of the church’s activities, becoming a member opens you to greater opportunities to use the spiritual gifts God has given.

The vows you are asked to take fall under four categories:

**Doctrinal** | You must believe the Bible.

**Character** | You must seek to grow into the likeness of Christ, not through proud self-reliance but through constant repentance and trust in the Holy Spirit.

**Community** | You promise regular involvement in the life and ministry of the congregation.

**Accountability** | You hold yourself accountable to the leadership and to one another to live up to these promises, and you seek to be a biblical peacemaker in your relationships.

If you decide to stay involved with Redeemer without membership, there will be no effort to pressure you into joining. You may still participate in many activities if you have chosen not to pursue formal membership.

For more information, visit: [www.redeemer.com/membership](http://www.redeemer.com/membership).

## Ministries > Three Congregations



### **One Church with Three Congregations**

Beginning with the RENEW Campaign in Fall 2009, Redeemer began to envision a future as a collegiate church — keeping one Redeemer, but meeting as separate, collegiate congregations. In other words, we embarked on a plan to “congregationalize” through the means of a collegiate model of three generative congregations.

These congregations are all equally Redeemer, but they each face their neighborhoods more fully, raise up new leaders, improve pastoral care, and, over time, generate their own new neighborhood-based daughter congregations.

### **A Church Not for Ourselves**

Undergirding all the planning and decisions as we began to implement the collegiate model in 2011, one guiding principal was looked to at every stage: we are not a church for ourselves.

We reconnected to something Tim used to say back in the first months of Redeemer’s life: “We are not a church for ourselves. We are not here to build a church just like what we’ve always wanted to have. We want to build a church for people who don’t go to church, so they can hear the good news.”

### **A Renewed Outward Face**

New church plants are able to consider the needs of those outside their community because that is where everyone is—outside. However, typically somewhere around 25 to 30 years into the life of the church, the voices of the community inside become louder and more insistent than those outside. Of course, it’s an easy problem to have because those outside have no voice at all, being still outside.

As we celebrate 25 years of meeting as a church in 2014, our goal for Redeemer is to avoid the trap of listening only to ourselves. We seek to keep fresh the vision that brought us into being: we are not a church for ourselves.

Churches of all ages and stages struggle to keep a balance between the upward face (hearts worshiping God), the inward face (meeting the needs of those in the community), and the outward face (welcoming in those who don’t believe so that they can hear the gospel). God has gifted Redeemer particularly in communicating with our New York friends and neighbors who do not attend, or even like, church.

## Ministries > Three Congregations

### **“Not for Ourselves” Means at Least Four Things**

- 1 We design our programs, our communications and our priorities around the needs of our New York friends who need to hear the gospel, not around ourselves and what would make us happy or comfortable.
- 2 We give time and money in service to our neighbors and our city, helping those in need before and instead of serving ourselves.
- 3 Within the community, we put the needs of others before our own, considering the health of the Body as a whole rather than just our own tribe (of parents or singles or young or old or white or Asian or anything).
- 4 We come to church not as consumers, but in order to be equipped through worship and training to serve others.

Over the years these priorities have not changed, and those who are committed to Redeemer continue to make the many sacrifices this principal leads us to. Reminding ourselves over and over of what it means to be a church for outsiders is hard work. It involves avoiding easy solutions and comfortable choices. Sometimes it means sacrificing dearly held preferences. And it always means seeing and hearing through the eyes and ears of unbelieving New Yorkers, rather than simply following one's inclinations.

To learn more and receive email updates, visit:

[www.redeemer.com/downtown](http://www.redeemer.com/downtown)

[www.redeemer.com/eastside](http://www.redeemer.com/eastside)

[www.redeemer.com/westside](http://www.redeemer.com/westside)

## Center for FAITH & WORK

Redeemer's Center for Faith & Work (CFW) is the cultural engagement arm of the Redeemer movement. Our hope is that through this ministry we will be able to bring to life the gospel's unique power to transform people to seek the good of this city and beyond. All of CFW's numerous programs are aimed at connecting, equipping, and mobilizing the church to effectively engage the world, emphasizing the importance of meaningful faith and work integration.

### **Connecting**

It is easy to lose a clear sense of purpose and calling in the day-to-day hustle of New York City. By connecting with others in our vocation we're enabled to discover, maintain, and sharpen our purpose & effectiveness. Our programs help people connect to God, to themselves, and to others. Vocation Groups, in particular, help connect people within similar industry clusters to wrestle through the implications of calling and faithfulness, developing an understanding of the reality that the gospel is indeed renewing all things.

### **Equipping**

A focus on how the gospel can renew hearts, communities, and the world plays a critical role in equipping the church for thoughtful cultural engagement. This theological formation comes alive when accompanied by meaningful spiritual formation in the context of committed community. The Gotham Fellowship has been specifically designed to provide this kind of holistic, intensive discipleship for leadership in the church and the world. In addition, the Gospel & Culture lectures and annual conference offer interaction with thought-leaders in every sphere of culture.

### **Mobilizing**

The gospel renews our humanity so that we can be a people who look outward to serve the needs around us. As a connected and equipped church, we want to effectively mobilize people throughout the city – across vocations and industries, civic and artistic sectors – to creatively apply and embody the hope-giving power of the gospel. Our Arts Ministries promote the importance of the arts in nurturing our imagination to see the unseen realities of the gospel and the Entrepreneurship Initiative helps entrepreneurs to envision, create, and implement ventures that serve the common good. These are just two important programs among others that help foster this kind of gospel-infused mobilization into the city.

We hope that you will join the hundreds of leaders and volunteers who are making the Center for Faith & Work a vibrant part of our church life and a catalyst for ongoing research and development for how the gospel can indeed be at the heart of a flourishing city.

To learn more about the Center for Faith & Work, explore our website at [www.faithandwork.org](http://www.faithandwork.org) or email [cfw@redeemer.com](mailto:cfw@redeemer.com)  
Resources available at [www.faithandwork.org/resources](http://www.faithandwork.org/resources).





Redeemer City to City helps start new churches in global cities and creates content resources for leaders who seek to bring the gospel to every part of life. It was founded as a part of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in 2000 and became a separate nonprofit in 2008.

### **Church Planting**

For the first time in the history of the world more than 50 percent of the world's population lives in cities. Most leading urbanologists estimate that by 2050 the number of people living in cities will exceed 70 percent. The growth of cities is the missional challenge of our generation.

We believe that new churches are the best way to reach new generations, new residents and new people groups in a city with the gospel. In fact, new churches are 6 to 10 times more likely to reach non-believers with the gospel than older, more established churches. If we are to reach the rapidly growing number of people in cities who do not know Christ, we need hundreds and thousands of new churches to be established.

Redeemer City to City has been collaborating with urban church planters and pastors for the past twenty years. We recruit, train, coach and sometimes fund church planters working in more than 60 global cities. Altogether we've helped to start over 200 churches since our founding, and our hope is that each of these new churches would launch other gospel-centered churches that serve their cities.

### **Content Resources**

We are also publishing content based on over twenty years of ministry in New York, and making it available to church planters, pastors, and Christians everywhere in the form of published books, group studies and digital content. A key resource based on our church planter training is the book *Center Church*, released in September 2012.

You can find out more about us at [www.redeemercitytocity.com](http://www.redeemercitytocity.com).



Hope for New York (HFNY) is Redeemer's mercy and justice outreach to the city and is separately incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization.

### **Our Mission & Vision**

Hope for New York mobilizes volunteers and financial resources to support over 40 non-profit affiliates serving the poor and marginalized in New York City. Our vision is to create a New York City in which individuals and communities experience spiritual, personal, social and economic well-being through the demonstration of Christ's love.

### **How We Work**

We currently support organizations that serve various populations including inner-city youth, low-income families, homeless, the elderly, immigrants and those living with HIV/AIDS.

We seek to help these affiliates help even more New Yorkers in need.

- By connecting them with volunteers from local churches.
- By giving grants to fund their programs — like food pantries, youth mentoring, and career centers.
- By offering training and consulting to help them do their work even better.

Since our inception in 1992, HFNY has distributed over \$9 million in grants to start, expand and strengthen non-profit organizations throughout New York City.

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

We offer volunteer opportunities to serve New Yorkers in need nearly every day of the week in neighborhoods across the city. Our opportunities range from mentoring at-risk youth to preparing meals for people in recovery to teaching English as a Second Language to recent immigrants.

To get involved as a volunteer, visit us at [www.hfny.org](http://www.hfny.org).

## Ministries > Additional

### **Diaconate**

The Diaconate, a group of men and women nominated, trained, elected and appointed by Redeemer elders and members, exists to contribute to the building of a repentant and rejoicing community through loving, truth-telling relationships where practical, visible needs are being met while hearts are being changed through encounters with Jesus and one another. We express in practical ways Christ's command to all believers to love our neighbor as ourselves.

To learn more about receiving care, visit [www.redeemer.com/care](http://www.redeemer.com/care).

### **Counseling**

Redeemer Counseling Services exists to serve the city, restoring lives with truth and grace. We provide biblically-based professional counseling for individuals, couples and families. For information, please contact our Services Coordinator.

Email: [rcs@redeemer.com](mailto:rcs@redeemer.com)

Phone: (212) 370-0475 x1365

To learn more, visit [www.redeemer.com/counseling](http://www.redeemer.com/counseling).

### **Families**

New York City is a great place for all stages of family life, from dating or engaged to married, to raising children and teens. Redeemer Family Ministries wants to equip couples, parents and children to love God, love each other and love the city.

To learn more, visit [www.redeemer.com/families](http://www.redeemer.com/families).

### **College Students**

RUF City Campus Ministry is a church-based, college student focused program that reaches out with the historic Christian truths to students in New York City, seeking to answer the questions college students have, instill community, and give guidance where it is needed.

It's important that students have a place where it is safe to think about the larger questions in life, see how the gospel intersects with these questions, and work out what that looks like. City Campus is, therefore, a place for both convinced and unconvinced, those who are Christians, and those who are not. All are welcome to come, eat (if there is food!), listen, and even interact if desired.

Our mission is to communicate the historic Christian gospel so that it is plausible to the skeptical student as well as life-changing for the believing student.

Email: [contact@citycampusministry.com](mailto:contact@citycampusministry.com)

To learn more, visit [www.citycampusministry.com](http://www.citycampusministry.com).

“As a church of Jesus Christ, Redeemer exists to help build a great city for all people through a movement of the gospel that brings personal conversion, community formation, social justice and cultural renewal to New York City and, through it, to the world.”

**Redeemer Presbyterian Church**  
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