

REDEEMER Report



JUNE 2017

NOW IS WHEN IT *REALLY* GETS INTERESTING ... !

If you missed the congregational meeting on May 20, then you missed an historic event. Redeemer Presbyterian Church is no more. Instead, there are three new churches: Redeemer East Side, Redeemer West Side, and Redeemer Downtown (and of course a new congregation, Redeemer Lincoln Square, the first of many to follow.)

At the event, attended by well over 600 congregants, the church members voted to disband Redeemer Presbyterian Church, and to constitute three new churches, each with their own senior pastor: Abe Cho at East Side; David Bisgrove

at West Side; and John Lin Downtown.

Dismissed with thanks was Senior Pastor and founder, Timothy Keller, who now bears the honorific *Senior Pastor Emeritus*. Not that he has retired (as he keeps telling everyone!) but he will move to the Redeemer City to City side of things to teach at Reformed Theological Seminary NYC (a partnership between Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS) and Redeemer City to City). Dr. Keller's new role is to prepare new church planters to fuel the growth of new churches city wide, as well as globally.

Brian Stanton gave his usual clear and understandable financial update, and Drew Field admirably walked everyone through the thicket of simultaneous motions that would change bylaws, create new churches, continue the Corporation of Redeemer Presbyterian Church to administer shared goals and services (i.e. mortgage(s), Central Services), assigning members and pastors, as well as elders, deacons, and deaconesses, to each of the three new churches and electing new trustees.

Although all members have been requested to identify with
(Continued on page 6)

REDEEMER COUNSELING SERVICES: RESTORING LIVES WITH TRUTH AND GRACE

Redeemer Counseling Services has launched its new website: counseling.redeemer.com. You can visit the site for more information, and during the launch phase in the month of June you can download a free sermon series by Tim Keller, *Psalms: The Songs of Jesus* on praying our

doubts, fears, tears, and guilt.

More than 450 individuals, couples, and families receive care each week at Redeemer Counseling Services. Many more receive group counseling, career direction services, and attend various workshops. With our unique approach to counseling care, Redeemer

Counseling has become a resource for the whole city.

Our vision is not only to transform people from all walks of life through our gospel-centered approach, but also to equip others to counsel through the redemptive power of the gospel. As such, the
(Continued on page 4)

ASSESSING DISCIPLESHIP AT REDEEMER

BY JESSICA SU

In March Redeemer conducted a church-wide survey on discipleship and spiritual habits. As Redeemer transitions into three distinct churches and seeks to fulfill the Rise pledge of increasing the number of Christians from 5% to 15% in the city, it's more important than ever to help attendees live out their faith.

We had a goal of at least 500 completed surveys per congregation, and thanks to your support, 1,549 adults participated. The results helped us to understand where congregants are in their spiritual walk and how Redeemer can improve discipleship offerings.

Among the highlights, we learned that there are three predominant groups of people at Redeemer, each with distinct needs: new attendees, those growing in their faith, and mature Christians. Not surprisingly, the more engaged attendees were in community, scripture, service, and leadership, the more spiritual growth they reported. A strong foundation in the Bible and having personal quiet times was key. For many, childhood laid the foundation for spiritual devel-

opment; 75% of those being very knowledgeable in the Bible said the Bible and/or Christianity influenced their homes growing up.

Redeemer has stressed the importance of being known in a community group, and while the number of respondents who said they attend a community group (CG) was strong — 70%, the actual number of Redeemer congregants in a CG is lower at ~33% (based on CG records in our database). One of the most common reasons for not joining community groups was lack of time and scheduling, especially for people with busy work hours or parents trying to juggle family time. Some also said they have not found a community group they felt comfortable in, citing differences in age (baby boomers vs. the majority of attendees in their 20s-30s) and feeling intimidated to join a long-standing group with established friendships.

We also learned that while many felt *equipped* to serve the poor and marginalized, share their faith with others, practice hospitality, and integrate faith with work, relatively few did

so regularly.

As we reflect on the findings, we're working through different approaches to reach those who are struggling with spiritual growth. We're experimenting with foundational tools for Bible reading, online learning, and smaller groups to foster spiritual growth/accountability.

In the meantime, we challenge you to consider taking one step towards living out your faith more intentionally. Perhaps you could commit to regular scripture reading and prayer, or start a prayer/accountability group (more information about these "triads" is to come) with one to two other friends. As one participant in an earlier focus group said, "[We need] to decide if we're a cruise ship or a battleship. Right now often times we're a cruise ship. A cruise ship starts in one place, goes out to have some fun, and comes back to the same place. But a battleship has a mission. It goes out, and it has a purpose."

Send us your comments or questions at discipleship@redeemer.com

REDEEMER REPORT

The Redeemer Report is a publication of the Redeemer Presbyterian Church.
Office: 1166 Avenue of the Americas, 16th Floor, New York, NY 10036
212-808-4460 (T) 212-808-4465 (F) www.redeemer.com

Kathy Keller
Heather Klein

Hunter College Auditorium
E. 69th St.
(between Park & Lexington)
Services: 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.

W83rd Ministry Center
150 W. 83rd St.
(between Columbus & Amsterdam)
Services: 9:30/11:30 a.m., 5 & 7 p.m.

Salvation Army Auditorium
120 W. 14th St.
(between 6th & 7th Aves.)
Services: 9:30 a.m. & 5 p.m.

THIS MONTH, SUPPORT KIDS LIKE MAX THROUGH HOPE FOR NEW YORK

This month, Hope for New York is focusing on its affiliates who work with children and youth as part of their “School’s Out” fundraising campaign.

Max Bridge, a 17-year-old from the South Bronx, is involved with Mont Lawn City Camp — an affiliate of Hope for New York. Max is currently a junior in high school, and he has attended Mont Lawn Camp, a summer camp for at-risk youth in New York City, since he was six years old. Below, he shares his story of how God worked through his mentors at Mont Lawn to help him see his relationship with Jesus in a new way — and how that has changed his life.

I was raised by my mom, who played the role of both father and mother for me and my four brothers. We weren’t the wealthiest family, but we also weren’t the most needy. Growing up, I saw a lot of good and a lot of bad, which was really overwhelming. There’s so much negativity in the South Bronx. A lot of people barely make it to 16.

I used to be the kid who sat in the back of class not talking to anyone. I wouldn’t even take my hood off in school. I would just walk around, by myself, lonely. I was angry. I was depressed.

My family went to church when we were all younger, but things changed when my brothers were introduced to drugs and alcohol. I’m grateful that God didn’t let me take that road. I can now see how even before I really started following Him, He had my back.

Still, my relationship with God was weird. When I prayed, it felt like I was just talking to myself. It felt crazy. Then my grandparents died. That’s when I lost hope in Jesus.

The day before my grandmother died, I prayed for her. When she died, it felt like God hadn’t answered my prayers. Everyone was telling me there’s this God that we pray to and He answers all prayers, but



when I prayed for my grandmother, He didn’t answer. I felt so empty. And then my grandfather went into a depression and died five years later. Their deaths really hit me. I was fueled by anger and depression. I blamed Jesus for their deaths. I blamed Him for other problems I was going through. I saw everything and everyone around me as negative.

That summer, I went to Mont Lawn Camp, a summer camp that I’d gone to since I was a little kid. But the way the counselors talked about

God hit me in a new way and really stuck with me. I learned that God doesn’t always answer our prayers immediately, and that sometimes He doesn’t give you what you want, but He will give you what you need.

I was able to see that God really does have a plan for me. My mentors there helped me build that relationship I had always been seeking and gave me a better chance to find what I had been looking for.

I started praying everyday, and praying became more comfortable.

Reading the Bible got more comfortable. I started seeking help from Jesus, and I started to build confidence. He helped me channel my anger into something better. I play basketball for my school. I stopped being the kid who sat in the back and didn’t talk to anyone.

In the past couple years of following Jesus, He has changed the way I view things. He’s changed my attitude towards people, towards life, in a positive way. He’s given me a sense of security. And as I’ve

(Continued on page 6)

ELECTED TO CARE: THE DIACONATE WELCOMES A NEW CLASS OF OFFICERS

The behind the scenes work of the Redeemer Diaconate, though often unnoticed, plays a vital role in loving and serving the church community. This group of dedicated individuals seeks to administer God's mercy and grace in tangible, meaningful ways by meeting the various needs — physical, financial, emotional and/or spiritual — of the congregants attending Redeemer.

This task requires a sacrificial investment of time and energy to ensure that congregants are cared for well, so as to eventually facilitate a full restoration to self-sufficiency and stability.

Services of the Redeemer Diaconate include connecting congregants to financial resources, counseling, job search skills training, or other means necessary to meet immediate needs in their lives. The deeks (our affectionate term for deacons and deaconesses) also make themselves available after

worship services to those who are in need of prayers. In essence, our deeks are voluntarily agreeing to enter into the lives of these congregants and walk with them, guiding them both practically and spiritually as they navigate the waters of their individual circumstances.

The responsibility of our deeks is great, and as such the candidates wishing to serve in this role are carefully assessed and questioned for theological understanding as well as emotional and spiritual readiness to take on such a role. The individuals who have recently been elected in the new class of the Diaconate have met all the necessary qualifications and have, through a series of interviews, trainings and assessments, been approved by the elders and elected by church members as individuals uniquely fit to serve in this capacity.

It is with great pleasure and joy that we welcome the following individuals as newly elected deeks!

Redeemer Downtown

Deaconesses
Susan Lee
Catherina Park
Denise Sohn

Redeemer East Side

Deaconesses
Shirley Chew
Laura Yoshida
Meadou Kim

Deacons
Mark Chang
James Rim

Redeemer Lincoln Square

Deaconesses
Leslie Kim
Jordan Tanksley

Deacon
James Juhn

We are delighted that God has called these men and women to serve the church, and we are thankful for their invaluable commitment to caring for our faith community! Please pray for them as they embark on this new journey.

REDEEMER COUNSELING SERVICES ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

new website includes a section specifically for caregivers. The monthly Redeemer Counseling Newsletter is one such resource. The newsletter offers a counseling tool with each issue to equip pastors, counselors and all caregivers as they help

and guide others. In addition, you can find the caregiver resources page with other useful resources download.

Please take a moment to visit the new Redeemer Counseling website at **counseling.redeemer.com** to learn more

about the resources, workshops and services provided. Check back with Redeemer Counseling in the coming months to discover upcoming caregiver trainings and workshops and to register for a fall Renewal Group.

VISUAL AND PERFORMANCE ARTISTS CHOSEN FOR CFW'S SPRING 2017 ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE

The Center for Faith & Work is pleased to announce our Spring 2017 Artists-In-Residence: visual artist Jerry Dienes and performance artist Lea Fulton.

The two artists were chosen from invited proposals that explored the idea of “The Unfinished Work.” The theme has inspired creative reflections on eschatological tension — the anticipation and hope for God’s coming kingdom inherent in our work — as an act of faith. Fulton’s work will explore “the unfinished work” through an immersive installation centered on the experience of forgiveness, where Dienes’ work will employ the trompe l’oeil painting technique to visually explore the theological territory of Tolkien’s famous short story “Leaf by Niggle.”

CFW’s artist-in-residence program has a two-pronged purpose: to support emerging and established local artists through the commissioning of new work, and to celebrate and contribute to the intrinsic value of the arts as a vital fabric of the city. Being devoted to the flourishing of all New York City, CFW is proud to offer selected resident artists the opportunity, resources, financing, and support to create works of art that contribute to New York’s rich and creative culture. A recent example of this was former Artist-in-Res-

idence Sasha Arutyunova whose CFW commissioned photographs were featured in the New York Times feature *Capturing New York City, as It Awakens*.

JERRY DIENES

Jerry Dienes has lived and worked in New York City since 1984. After initially training at the Columbus College of Art & Design in Columbus, Ohio, Jerry came to NY both to pursue classical art education and gallery representation. He studied figure painting and drawing with Jacob Collins at The Water Street Atelier, as well as figure drawing with Dan Thompson, Michael Grimaldi, and Ephraim Rubenstein at the Art Student’s League. Most recently he has studied part-time with Justin Wood at the Grand Central Atelier in New York.

Jerry creates classical and realistic paintings of still life, portraits, landscapes, nudes, trompe l’oeils, interiors, religious narratives and murals. His religious paintings have been published in two books by Macmillan, *Who Do You Say That I Am?* and *Blessed Art Thou Among Women*, books about Jesus and Mary, respectively.

LEA FULTON

Lea Fulton recently enjoyed a long-term performance ex-

perience with Third Rail Projects in the immersive theater show, *The Grand Paradise*. She created her own immersive theater project for the 2008 Philly Fringe Festival with co-collaborator Ryan Ross. She is deeply interested in the intersection of performance and presence.

Teaching experience includes: movement coach for two upcoming narrative films with the director Benjamin Stamper, workshops in Community Building through Somatic Listening and a current endeavor teaching technique and composition with Alexandra Beller at DanceWave in Brooklyn. She has choreographed videos for the bands The Loom, Apollo Run, and electronic music artist Nadia Ali, as well as co-creating a dance film “Chloes” that was selected for the Dance on Camera Film Festival in 2010.

Currently, she is a part of the collaborative *The Space We Make*, a group of musicians, dancers and writers who make site-specific work, as well as a collaborator in *Motley Dance* and *Alexandra Beller/Dances*.

The works produced by Jerry Dienes and Lea Fulton will be shared with the Redeemer community in the coming months as they are completed.



1166 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS
16TH FLOOR
NEW YORK, NY 10036

FIRST CLASS MAIL
US POSTAGE
PAID
NEW YORK NY
PERMIT # 349

IT REALLY GETS INTERESTING ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

the church of their choice, if they want to move from one of the new churches to another anytime in the remainder of 2017, it will be treated as a simple administrative item. Starting in 2018, changing

churches will be like leaving/joining any new church.

It was a joyous occasion, with more excitement and energy than the typical congregational meeting. Glen Kleinknecht reminisced about

the earliest days of Redeemer's creation, and prayed for the Kellers, then all sang *There is a Redeemer*. And then everyone celebrated at the reception which followed.

SUPPORT KIDS THROUGH HFNY ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 3)

grown in my relationship with Him, I can see the ways that He's had my back all along.

That's one of the really cool parts about growing up in the South Bronx, being part of Mont Lawn City Camp, which is the year-round version of summer camp here in the city. They've been family to me — that's how I view everyone there. I call everybody there my brother and my sister.

Everyone there genuinely cares for one another, and they've shown me that, as Christians, we are called to love each other.

Now I'm a mentor-in-training to another kid, a nine year old. He gets me, and I get him. I love this kid to death. My job is to pass down to him whatever I learn. So I'm just gathering knowledge, reading God's Word, and trying to convey that to my mentee to help him

grow in his relationship with God.

As for me, I'm ready for whatever God gives me, and I know He has a plan for me.

This month, you can help Hope for New York support children and youth, like Max, across New York City by giving at hfny.org/schoolsout by June 30. All gifts will go to organizations that support young people in our city throughout the year!