

APRIL 2018

EQUIPPED TO SERVE: NEW DIACONATE CANDIDATES GROW IN THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF MERCY

BY JENNY CHANG

In his First Letter to Timothy, Paul shares character requirements for church elders and deacons with his young protégé; there's also a place in 1 Timothy where it says, "They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons." Though the exact nature of the test is left unspecified to allow for cultural variability, here at Redeemer our Diaconate candidates go through six months of training and evaluation.

Our Diaconate ministry

is a vital expression of mercy and a place where congregants can get resources as they work through hardships and think about their own spiritual formation. It takes a body of committed and trained deacons and deaconesses to walk alongside the numerous congregants who come forward each year, seeking assistance for a variety of needs. The individuals who make up the Diaconate — though in most cases compassionate and merciful by nature — must undergo thorough and

intentional equipping in order to prepare them to effectively serve with this important ministry of mercy.

This spring we are excited to have the following 16 new Diaconate candidates:

Downtown:

Annabel Endean,
Tony Fornabaio,
Carolina Ilano,
Anita Lee,
Joe Lee,
Valerie Ong,
Jacob Thomas

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THANK YOU FOR GIVING TO BRING HOPE THIS EASTER!

We at Hope for New York thank everyone in the Redeemer community who celebrated God's response to our spiritual poverty this Easter by giving generously to our neighbors in need.

100% of the gifts to our Easter Sacrificial Offering earlier this month help bring hope to our neighbors by direct-

ly supporting programs at our non-profit affiliates.

And God is doing some incredible work through our affiliates. From residential recovery programs at The Bowery Mission to mentoring and discipleship at Young Life to art-based shelter outreach at Gifted Hands, we're constantly in awe of how God is using our

partners to transform lives and communities.

We hope you were encouraged by the testimonies shared at each of the Redeemer Easter services. Here are some highlights from the stories of restoration that our neighbors shared:

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MEET THE 8-YEAR-OLD FROM REDEEMER EAST SIDE WHO RAN FOR HIS NEIGHBORS IN NEED

BY HOPE FOR NEW YORK

It started when 8-year-old Rider Creasy saw a homeless woman sitting with her child in Times Square.

“It made me feel really sad,” Rider said, “because I thought that it would be really hard to take care of your child in the street with no food and no bed.”

So when Rider, who attends Redeemer East Side with his parents John and Carrie, heard about the Hope for New York Charity Run at church, he saw an opportunity to use what he loves to do to care for his neighbors.

He joined the HFNY Runners — a team of more than 80 runners from Redeemer and churches across the city — as its youngest member, and rallied his family and friends to raise over \$1,600 to support programs serving New Yorkers in need.

“I think that God gave me the opportunity to help poor

people by running HFNY’s 5K,” he wrote on his Charity Run fundraising page. “He made me a really good runner and I really like to do it.”



Rider (right) training in Central Park for the HFNY Charity Run with his friend Joshua (left)

The HFNY Charity Run, which took place on March 17 on Roosevelt Island, also included runners from Downtown, East Side, Lincoln Square (“LSQ Heels of Steel”), and West Side (“WESTSIDE/

BESTSIDE”). Together, the HFNY Runners raised over \$50,000 to support programs of Hope for New York’s 50 non-profit affiliates, which include jobs skills training, youth mentoring, and food and shelter for men and women experiencing homelessness.

“I think the Bible tells us that we should love our neighbors as ourselves,” Rider wrote. “God does not only love the people that have homes. He loves everybody even if they don’t have money for dinner and also the people who have more than thousands of dollars. I guess I have neighbors like both of those kinds of people and I think God wants me to love them all.”

We are so thankful for Rider and his teammates for using their legs and their voices to love and serve their neighbors in need!

REDEEMER REPORT

Cregan Cooke, Kathy Keller
Heather Klein

Hunter College Auditorium
E. 69th St.
(btw Park & Lexington)
Services: 10:30 a.m.
and 5 p.m.

W83rd Ministry Center
150 W. 83rd St.
(btw Columbus & Amsterdam)
Services: 9:30 & 11:30 a.m.
and 5 p.m.

West Side Church Plant:
NY Society for Ethical Culture
2 W. 64th St.
(at Central Park West)
Service: 10:30 a.m.

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

BEETHOVEN AND JESUS

On Easter morning there was an orchestra on stage at each Redeemer service. For the past four years Redeemer Downtown has featured the music of Ludwig van Beethoven. This year, his Third Symphony, “Eroica,” framed our service: Prelude, Offertory and Postlude. Why do we choose him each year?

Leonard Bernstein describes something of our rationale:

“Form is only an empty word, a shell. Without this gift of inevitability; a composer can write a string of perfectly molded sonata-allegro movements, with every rule obeyed, and still suffer from bad form. Beethoven broke all the rules, and turned out pieces of breath-taking rightness. Rightness — that’s the word! When you get the feeling that whatever note that succeeds the last is the only possible note that can rightly happen at that instant, in that context, then chances are you’re listening to Beethoven. Melodies, fugues, rhythms — leave them to the Tchaikovskys and the Hindemiths and Ravel. Our boy has the real goods, the stuff from Heaven, the power to make you feel at the finish: *Something is right in the world. There is something that checks throughout, that follows its own law consistently:*

BY HARRISON HOLLINGSWORTH, DOWNTOWN AM MUSIC DIRECTOR

something we can trust, that will never let us down.”

Beethoven dedicated his “Eroica” Symphony “to the memory of a great man,” Napoleon Bonaparte, whom he initially admired before Napoleon betrayed his political ideals, crowned himself emperor and engulfed Europe in war for over a decade. The music itself reflects this admiration: it is noble as well as tragic and leads inexorably to a glorious finale. Its power and “rightness” is indeed beyond words, and provides a glimpse of Christ’s noble character, crucifixion, and triumphant resurrection. This wordless beauty is worthwhile as an end to itself, but it also has potent evangelistic power. As Tim Keller says in *Evangelistic Worship* (which is worth reading in its entirety):

“The power of art draws people to behold it. Good art bears its message into the soul through the imagination and begins to appeal to reason, for art makes ideas plausible. The quality of music and speech in worship will have a major impact on its evangelistic power. In many churches, the quality of the music is mediocre or poor, but it does not disturb the faithful. Their faith makes the words of the hymn or the song meaningful despite its artistically poor expression, and further,

they usually have a personal relationship with the song leader and musicians. But any outsider who arrives not convinced of the truth and having no relationship to the music leaders will be bored or irritated by the poor offering. Excellent aesthetics includes outsiders, while mediocre or poor aesthetics exclude. The low level of artistic quality in many churches guarantees that only insiders will continue to come. *To say this positively, the attraction of good art will play a major part in drawing non-Christians.* [emphasis mine].”

On Easter Sunday, Beethoven’s triumphant masterwork, inspired by the hero that failed, served as a reflection on the triumph of Jesus, our true hero. Napoleon himself is purported to have opined similarly near the end of his life, in exile after defeat at the Battle of Waterloo:

“I know men; and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between Him and every person in the world there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded His empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for him.”

AN EVENING WITH MARILYNNE ROBINSON

BY CENTER FOR FAITH & WORK

On February 21, the Center for Faith & Work and Redeemer Churches hosted *An Evening with Marilynne Robinson*, the world-renowned Pulitzer Prize winning author of books like *Gilead*, *Lila*, and *Housekeeping*. Also a humanities scholar and avid Calvinist, Robinson is the author of countless essays of non-fiction, exploring subjects from Shakespeare to the Puritans to American identity to Scripture, theology, and more. One participant said of the event “I left inspired,” while another responded, “I *LOVED* this event. It was wonderful to hear Marilynne read her own work, and to witness in real-time the high degree of congruence between her written work and her beautiful, wise, thought-provoking articulation of various points.” Another church outsider remarked that they were thrilled to see CFW and Redeemer host such an “interdisciplinary, faith-and-work oriented, intellectually stimulating evening.”

Introducing the evening was best-selling author Sally Lloyd Jones (*The Children’s Storybook Bible*), who said of Robinson’s writing, “There are revelations on the page that ambush you with beauty. This is what it

feels like to believe. A faith is lived out. The sacredness of existing. The power of blessing. The Mystery of Redemption. The ordinary suffused with the divine. Being inside these stories I have, in the words of Ames [*Gilead*’s main character] — ‘that same feeling in the church, that I am dreaming what is true.’”

Robinson then read from her latest non-fiction collection *What Are We Doing Here?*, from her prescient essay “A Theology For This Moment” where she called for the implementation of theology within secular philosophical structures and cultural institutions. “A theology for our time should help us to know that Being is indeed the theater of God’s glory,” the essay concludes, laying out the importance of an orientation to the world for all humankind that is in reverent awe of the holiness of existence.

Robinson’s talk was followed by a discussion with CFW executive director David Kim. The two covered subjects that spanned from Robinson’s personal Christian faith, to Scripture and theology, to John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards, the author’s writing process, her view of our cultural and political moment, and the im-

portance of the written word. “The fact that we can, for example, create — and that we can create things that are profoundly positive, that effect the way that people see things forever afterward and so on, that is simply how God made the world, that is grace. That’s a dignity and a freedom that God gave to human beings in a singular way. It has no analogies. In other words, every best thing that anyone does is a pure manifestation of the grace of God.”

David Kim closed the event conveying Robinson’s impact, saying “You have been God’s grace to us, in what you have brought together — arguing against the deleterious effects of positivism, to the wonder of ordinary life and the beauty that’s intrinsic to that life lived in faithful service to God — you have embodied it in ways that none of us could have anticipated, and for that reason I say you are a real grace to us. So thank you.”

After the event, a reception for the audience in attendance was held in Redeemer’s 5th floor loft, along with an array of Robinson’s books for sale from local UWS booksellers Book Culture.

EQUIPPED TO SERVE ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

East Side:

Sherley Homere
Vanessa Jung
Maria Laino
Susana Turnbough

West Side/Lincoln Square:

Geoffrey Allen
Jacqueline Johnson
Jenny Nicholas
Greg Tsai

They have completed the theological and practical skills training required and will be examined by our elders. Throughout the process we have seen these individuals grow in their knowledge of the Word as well as their understanding of how they can best be the hands and feet of Jesus to those in need within our four churches. Their development and suitability for this ministry is evidenced in the comments we have received regarding their equipping.

I've learned that listening is a major component when ministering to people. I was reminded that you have to pray, love, and always ask God for guidance. Asking questions will also reveal a lot about a person and their situation. Putting a Band-Aid on doesn't fix the problem; you have to go to the heart of the issue. As a deacon, you always have to be aware of your need for God.

I really liked the exercise of going through the scenarios and generating different types of entry gate questions we would ask our clients. It is so easy to attack the problem at hand instead of stepping back to find out what that person is feeling now in their experience of suffering.

[It is] illuminating to think about our attitudes. This is especially helpful as we try to serve our clients ... keeping our minds

open and free from our biases, and centering [ourselves] in Christ and not ourselves.

God is responsible for heart change — there is nothing we can do by our own will to change our hearts.

These are the words of those who may soon be serving you and others in our family of churches! We invite you to rejoice with the Diaconate for God's provision of individuals who are gifted in the area of mercy, and who are willing to commit their time and energy to becoming better equipped to serve in this capacity. We look forward to introducing you to these remarkable individuals next month as they stand for election and installation and begin putting their training into action!

THANK YOU FOR GIVING ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

“Here, I've been fed the Word of God, and it's helping me understand myself and life and the world a lot better. I went through a lot growing up, but I've realized that God wasn't torturing me, he was there with me. I truly believe God knows where he wants you to be when he wants you to be there.”

— Edward, *The Bowery Mission*

“Before, I was timid and insecure. I had no self-confidence, no purpose beyond being a good student. I relied on my intelligence. But being part of Young Life helped me rely instead on the characteristics of God. I've experienced so many life-giving situations and heard so many words of love and truth.”

— David, *Young Life*

“I felt the love from jewelry class — the love, the patience, the respect that the world doesn't give you when you're homeless. I felt I got that at Gifted Hands. It boosted my self esteem. And to get connected back with my faith, it's like I'm somebody. God made me. No matter where I'm at. I'm still somebody. I'm still

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THANK YOU FOR GIVING ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 5)

worthy just like anybody else.”

– Sophia, *Gifted Hands*

*Interested in joining Hope for New York’s work to see all New Yorkers flourish spiritually, socially, and economically? Visit **hfny.org/volunteer** to volunteer your time and skills and **hfny.org/donate** to learn more about giving to strengthen our work.*