



TREE AT BOK TOWER GARDEN

RLC Newsletter

August 2020

A Message from Pastor Allman

What a crazy time in which we are living. At the time of this writing, Florida is experiencing national record breaking new positive cases of COVID-19, just as the credible experts (epidemiologists, scientists, medical professionals) predicted would happen. These coming the same weekend that Disney World has officially reopened, so we wait approximately 14 days to see that impact; and debates heat up about sending children and teachers back to in-person classrooms. As if that was not enough, this morning the news reported that a squirrel in Colorado was discovered to carry the Bubonic Plague. Whoever has been asking "What can go wrong next?" please stop. Amen?

No doubt ALL of us have been wishing and praying for this to

stop so we can move on to whatever the "new normal" is going to become. We are not there yet. The National Church (ELCA) and the Florida-Bahamas Synod have cancelled all large gathering events for the remainder of 2020. Some Churches that already reopened have once again abstained from in-person worship; and some Churches that had set a date to reopen for in-person worship have postponed that plan until further notice.

Redeemer continues the plan that was set months ago, that we will abstain from in-person worship and other large gatherings until further notice. We (the Council) continue to monitor what is being said by credible experts, the National Bishop (Rev. Elizabeth Eaton), and the Synod Bishop (Rev.

Pedro Suarez), and we will reevaluate when Florida enters into Phase 3 of the plan to reopen the State. We also understand and respect that there are strong opinions on all sides of any debate. Please understand that the Council is making difficult decisions with the best intentions for the safety of our members and friends. I personally would have a very difficult remainder of my life should we reopen prematurely and one of our beloved congregation contracted COVID-19 and suffered a slow and painful death.

During this difficult period, we are doing our best to keep our members and friends spiritually connected to God's Word through pre-recorded videos (Bible study, music, prayer, Bible readings, and Sunday messages)

uploaded to Redeemer's YouTube channel, Redeemer's Facebook page, and/or Redeemer's Website. If you need help connecting to any of these, please contact the office; or, anyone you may know who is more adept at technology than we are.

The Council has also contracted with a company that will install the necessary equipment in order to live stream worship on Sunday mornings. Because of the generosity of one of our members, who shall remain anonymous, Redeemer has been gifted with the money to cover the estimated cost. We are currently waiting on back-ordered parts before that can be installed. You might imagine that there are many Churches currently trying to install or update similar equipment.

Please subscribe to the Redeemer YouTube channel so when we are able to "go live" you will easily be able to watch our worship leaders provide a live service Sunday at 10:00 AM, while you are remaining safer at home.

Please continue to use your Redeemer directory to contact members and friends of Redeemer. If you cannot find yours, please contact the office for an electronic version or if you want a printed copy we can leave one out for you to stop by and pick up at your leisure. I especially encourage you to contact your Christian Family members that you do not already know. This is a great way to stay connected during this pandemic; and, to let others know that we care about each other.

Above all, please continue to pray, because we have no greater tool in our spiritual arsenal. Pray for Redeemer's leaders, members and friends of the congregation. Pray for our world and our nation. Pray for an end to this pandemic and a proven vaccine, readily available and affordable to all people. Pray for peace and harmony among our friends and neighbors. Pray for first responders, medical and hospital staff, teachers and students, those on our prayer list, and everyone who put their health and the health of their families at risk every day providing essential services. In other words, pray for everyone, and when you can, pray for them by name. Amen?

Pastor Allman 

Thank you for donating items for the food pantry in the narthex closet.

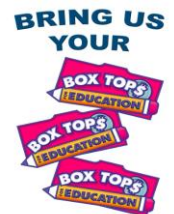
Please remember, NO open packages or containers.



Cover photo from Bok Tower Gardens in Lake Wales. This reflecting pool can be seen as you approach the singing tower.

Support for others

(Collection boxes are on the narthex counter)



News from the Office Administrator

August 2020

We are still in a holding pattern as this virus continues and at present, mid-July, our numbers have been rising. It is important that we remain vigilant and careful to protect our health. We are here in the office and available during office hours if you need us.

The Council has accepted a bid for a live stream camera and now we are waiting for all of the parts to arrive so we can begin to live stream our services! Since we are likely looking at “safer at home” for a while, we are hoping to return to something closer to normal. After the pandemic recedes and we are able to meet again, the live stream will continue for those who need to be at home. We will update all of you as we move forward. We have been blessed to receive a generous donation to help with the cost!

When I saw this story, it spoke to my heart, and I wanted to share it with you. Let’s all keep being the church:

“A few days ago a Kentucky garbage man noticed no trash cans were being put out at an elderly woman's house on his route for two straight weeks. He was concerned enough to share the address with his supervisor. She found the name of the woman at the address and called her: “Ms. Smith, we noticed you haven't put out your cans for a while. Are you ok?” Ms. Smith replied: “I’m ok. But my caretaker was so afraid of the virus that she stopped coming. I can’t get to the store. I don’t have any trash because I’ve run out of food. And I don’t have any family to help me.” After a long pause, the caller said: ‘You do now. We are your family’.

She let her truck driver know of the sad news. The next day, on his day off, he knocked on her door and asked her to make up a grocery list. “Ms. Smith— the list is too short.” She added a few more items. “Ms. Smith, this list is still too short. Would you mind if I looked into your fridge?” She relented. He opened the fridge and it was bare. Empty.

An hour later, he brought in dozens of bags of groceries for a woman he hardly knew.

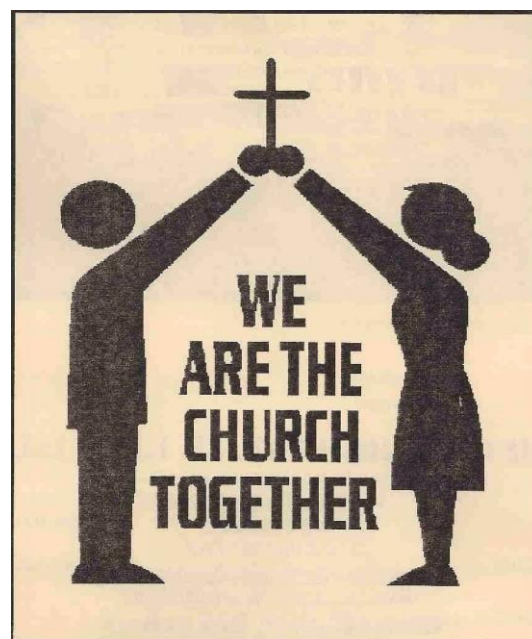
Tears. An air-hug that met social distancing protocol. And the garbage man walked out of the house of this woman who was physically immobile, but levitating. A garbage man decided he’d reach out to someone and church broke out. His supervisor shared the creed with this elderly woman: “You have a family now.”

I miss our services of worship. I do not like that it’s silent now. I'm sick to my stomach we had to push back our start-back date to gather. But church? Church is happening all around us. It’s a phone-call. It’s a bag of groceries. It happens anytime someone tells another person who is Jesus in his best disguise: “You have a family now.” Real church is not defined by a service of worship, but by servants of Christ.

Keep being church. That’s all you have to do.”

Please know that if you are in need of financial assistance, we have funds available at the church to help. This remains confidential: only Pastor will know that you received aid. We don’t want anyone left in need so please, speak with Pastor Allman if we can be helpful.

First and foremost, stay safe and healthy in your homes until we can safely meet again. Our first priority is the safety and wellbeing of all of you, so please be good to yourselves.



AUGUST

STEWARDSHIP

I cannot say it better than the Apostle Paul, “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you” (Philippians 1:2-4). Despite the pandemic and other stress producers you have remained faithful to God and our Lord, Jesus the Christ. Also, I am expressing gratitude for the staff, Council and other leaders of Redeemer who continue to lead with integrity, sometimes while making some very difficult and possibly unpopular decisions.

During this pandemic you have also been financially faithful in your offerings. Considering all that everyone is going through, it is a blessing from God through your support of Redeemer; and, while some expenses are down, we have been able to keep our staff employed, and who work diligently during the week, to maintain our regular office hours – Monday-Friday, 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

I suspect that some of our members donated their stimulus checks, as we received some substantial offerings when those were coming out. Also, one generous member, who shall remain anonymous, has donated enough money to cover the estimated cost of the equipment that will allow us to live stream worship on Sunday mornings (date TBD). This will allow our worship leaders to provide live worship on Sunday mornings while our members and friends who are in the high risk category can stay safer at home until a proven vaccine is readily available and affordable for all people.

As you remain faithful, please continue to pray because we have no greater tool in our spiritual arsenal. Pray for Redeemer’s leaders, members and friends of the congregation. Pray for our world and our nation. Pray for an end to this pandemic and a proven vaccine, readily available and



affordable to all people. Pray for peace and harmony among our friends and neighbors. Pray for first responders, medical and hospital staff, teachers and students, those on our prayer list, and everyone who put their health and the health of their families at risk every day providing essential services. In other words, pray for everyone, and when you can, pray for them by name. Amen?



Search for Redeemer Lutheran Church Sun City Center Florida and hit the red subscribe button. This will keep you current with videos from Pastor Allman.

The direct link below can be entered right in to your address bar.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUniSRGmRw4qLi2qmInoxw>

Social Ministry & Benevolence Thank you!

The Social Ministry Team wishes to thank you for your generous support of Haven of Hope. Our Thrivent Team provided needed items (Thank you Lois) and the generous monetary contributions will provide gift cards for residents. I spoke to Janet Smith, CEO of Haven of Hope, and she said a new resident is due there soon and she was thrilled about our gift cards.

August Benevolence

We are continuing to support the Sun City Veterans Memorial in the month of August. The funds we collect will be used for the upkeep of the facility. Bricks can still be purchased by going to their website or calling Walt Cowan.

Please consider donating to the memorial. Please mark your envelope or check with SCC Veterans Memorial. If you have not visited the memorial, consider visiting soon. It is a very peaceful feeling. Stay safe and healthy.

Blessings,

Jane Trefren and Social Ministry Team

Social Ministry project Good Samaritan Mission

We will continue collecting items for Good Samaritan Mission. They are in need of baby supplies and personal hygiene items. The Good Samaritan Mission is dedicated to a holistic approach to enhancing the spiritual, emotional and physical quality of life for those living in poverty. They currently serve the community by offering a food pantry, Adult Education Program, post-secondary scholarships, and Back to School and Christmas Outreach Events. Baby items especially larger diapers and toiletries can be dropped off at the church.

Current needs are:

- diapers (sizes 3, 4, 5, and 6)
- baby wipes
- shampoo & conditioner (travel size)
- deodorant
- toothbrushes
- toothpaste

All the hotel-size items are in great demand, as they are now working with the homeless in Tampa. If you would like a team member to shop for you, please consider making your donation by check to Redeemer Lutheran Church and note "Good Samaritan" project on the memo line and outside of your envelope. Thank you for supporting GSM!

During this difficult time, we still support our friends and neighbors.

Many of us are used to providing school supplies and health kit items for local schools. Because of the schools trying to get their schedules, we will wait until November to address these worthwhile causes.

Even though we are not physically together during this difficult time, we are spiritually connected. Please continue to pray for those who care for us, serve us, and those who protect us. Pray for our church that soon we will be together. Stay healthy.

Blessings,

Social Ministry Team



Behind the Scenes at GS

Hey! How are you guys doing? I hope that you are safe and sound and virus free. Grace and Peace to y'all!

I just wanted to get you guys up to date with where we are. As you know, after 24 years of giving away stuff we modified our ministry to where folks can "put some skin in the game" and earn the supplies they wanted. This worked really well. Then, we took the ministry to the streets and went mobile. A couple of the local agencies opened their doors to us and we were able to do our Adult Ed classes closer to where our students lived. And then...

Covid-19.

Okay, so we couldn't have the classes anymore. Both locations closed their doors. We modified our ministry again and, temporarily, we're delivering food supplies to several needy locations, always looking forward to beginning classes again and returning to our regularly scheduled program. Now, we are getting closer to the date when we can begin our classes again, since we coincide with the County school schedule. And then...

We still do not have remote locations for our classes. What do we do?

We are seeking God's direction as to what to do next. We do know that we are to continue our ministry format, believing that it is a healthier alternative than what we previously offered.

Where do you come in? I am glad you asked.

1. Please continue your faithful financial support. Some of you are still sending your support in the mail. Thank you. Some of you have even joined our Monthly Movers team. Thank you. If any of you wish to make an online donation, just click the green button below.
2. Please pray for us as we look at our options. We urgently need wisdom.
3. If you have any ideas, please feel free to share it with us.

Thank you! We love and appreciate y'all!

GSM

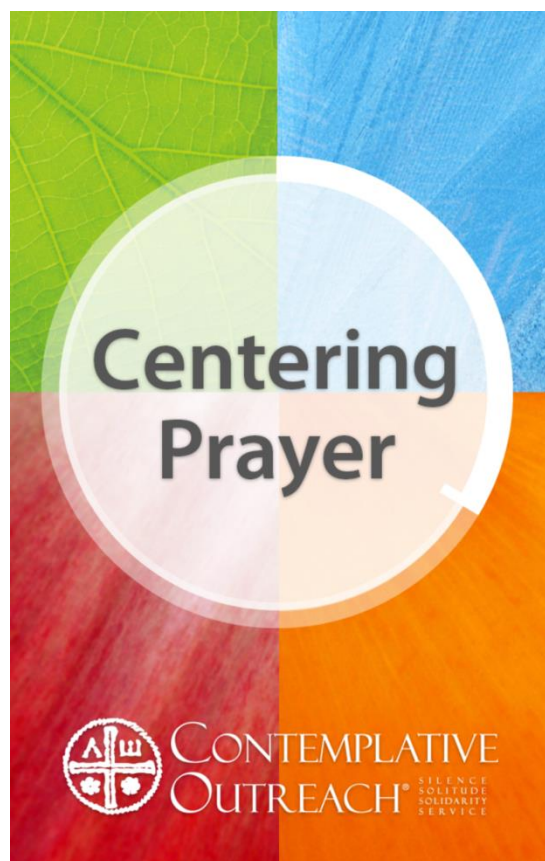
GOOD SAMARITAN MISSION
WIMAUMA, FLORIDA



GROWING IN FAITH

Centering Prayer: how should we; and, why should we?

We already know how to pray, right? Most, if not all of us, were taught to pray by our parents while we were still quite young. Bed time prayers and meal time prayers, and possibly even prayers of petition (asking for stuff) when were a little older. We may even have been taught to say a prayer of thanks for answered prayers. How many of us were taught by our parents to “be still” in the presence of God and listen?



I remember when I began to learn to “be still” and listen; and, as a Spiritual Director, I have experience teaching others to “be still” and listen. What was true of me as a beginner, and true of some others as beginners, was the time where I

needed to “be still” did not last very long – in the beginning. Thomas Merton (theologian and monk) said, “*We do not want to be beginners. But let us be convinced of the fact that we will never be anything else but beginners, all our life!*” Here is some good news: Beginners are welcome. I, too, am a beginner, even and especially after a number of years of practicing.

Centering Prayer is one of many spiritual disciplines. God has given us the disciplines of the spiritual life as a means of receiving God’s grace. In “The Cost of Discipleship” Dietrich Bonhoeffer makes it clear that grace is free, although it is not cheap. Of all the spiritual disciplines prayer is the most central because it ushers us into perpetual communion with God. Prayer brings us into the deepest and highest work of the human spirit. Real prayer is life creating and life changing. Prayer is the central avenue God uses to transform us.

Some have used the excuse that they have little or no time to pray, especially for sitting to listen and “be still.” Our need to “be doing” convinces us that we are accomplishing nothing when we “be still” to listen. I have before compared this to going to the doctor, rattling off a list of ailments, and then running out the door before the doctor can respond. How many of you do that? If you would not do that to a doctor; how would you justify doing it to God? Martin Luther declared, “*I have so much business I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer.*” Luther held it as a spiritual proverb that “*He that has prayed well has studied well.*”

Søren Kierkegaard once observed: “*A man prayed, and at first he thought that prayer was talking. But he became more and more quiet until in the end he realized that prayer is listening.*” Listening to the Lord is the first thing, the second thing, and the third thing necessary for successful intercession. Listening to God is the necessary prelude to intercession. We must hear, know, and obey the will of God before we pray it into the lives of others. The beginning of learning to pray for others is to listen for guidance. If you thought you already knew everything you needed to know about prayer, perhaps I can help you come back to the beginning.

Our prayer

- From Parish Nurse Team

“Lord, remind us today that good things surround us.
Babies and weddings, birthdays and anniversaries.

Remind us that we can turn off the TV and Facebook
And turn on fresh air, good books, long walks, pool floats,
Bird feeders, (aka squirrel feeders), and laughter.

Grant us eyes that see the wonderful world around us...
Sunshine, rain, salt water, graduations, scholarships, puppies.

As we struggle for connection behind our masks, remind us
That we need connection most of all.

Show us our friends, our families, our co-workers—
Help us to be intentional about loving others and
Honest about needing to be loved.

Thank you for a life of purpose.
Thank you for the good news all around us.
May we never take these things for granted. Amen.”

God bless you all! Stay safe, and stay healthy!

REMEMBER TO –

- Wear a mask if you need to go out**
- Wash hands frequently**
- Maintain 6 foot social distancing**



AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

- 1st – Martha Viohl**
- 3rd – Jennie Flietner, Margery Ruse**
- 4th – Anne Doerfler, Marty Gifford,
Dr. Oliver Hackett, Nancy Hayes,
Judy Kiel**
- 6th – Audrey Ercegovich**
- 7th - Dan Pollert**
- 8th- Jenise German**
- 10th – Denise Fitzpatrick**
- 12th- Nancy McIntosh**
- 14th – Betty Morrison**
- 21st – Dick Fricke**
- 26th – Richard Johnston**
- 27th- Grace Springer**
- 28th –Ginny Acker**
- 29th- Hans Barfels, Pete Moose**



AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

- 1st – Sally & Michael Trenski**
- 3rd – Kurt & Elfi Nolden**
- 10th- John & Emma Jean Mostoller**
- 16th – George & Susan Grosskopf**
- 20th – Mike & MaryAnn Sigler**
- 22nd - Dianne & Joe Good**
- 24th – Paul & Nancy Carrier**
- 29th – Jerry & Carolyn DeCarbo**
- 31st- Dr. Oliver & Kathie Hackett
Bob & Valerie Southwell Jr.**



We ask if you notice information is missing or incorrect, please let us know. Thank you!



Prayer List updates

Please help me update the prayer list. If you see a name you added that should have been removed or maybe you have someone new to pray, for. let's get them added to the list.

Website, Facebook, and YouTube

I hope everyone is familiar with our website at this point. Pastor Allman has been posting videos on Redeemer Lutheran's Facebook page and also on our website.

www.redeemerlc.com

On our website you will see tabs across the top. Please look for **Sunday Worship**. Hover over it and you will see **August Worship 2020**, July will remain available through the month of August under the Sunday Worship heading, then it will be moved under **Archives**.

Click down on August Worship 2020 and it will bring you to the prayers, readings, music, and Pastor Allman's message. Dates are arranged in reverse of our normal calendar. The older dates will be toward the bottom of the page.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or email Kadie. I am always happy to help you if I can. Now let's give you some basic info to help you find our YouTube Channel.

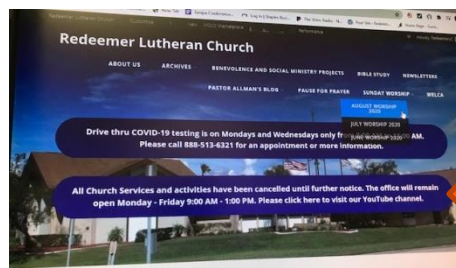
YouTube

If you are on YouTube use the search feature to search for Redeemer Lutheran Church Sun City Center Florida. Once you have found it hit the red subscribe button. This will keep you current with videos from Pastor Allman.

The direct link below can be entered right in to your address bar.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUniSRGmRw4qLi2qmolnoxw>

There is also a link directly to YouTube on our church website. Just click on the second button and it will take you right to it.



Just for fun

Kadie's Apple Crisp

Butter an 11x7 pan & preheat oven to 350

5 cups of apples sliced (I recommend Honeycrisp apples)

1 cup sugar

1 cup flour

4-5 tsp of cinnamon

¼ cup butter

Optional- 1 tbsp honey

In a medium bowl mix together sugar, flour, and cinnamon. Cut butter into the flour mixture until it resembles coarse crumbs.

Place cut apples in pan, drizzle honey lightly over the apples and dust with cinnamon. Sprinkle topping mixture over the apples. Bake about 45 minutes until the topping is crisp.

Sever warm with vanilla ice cream.

This is a copy of the survey that was sent to 175 people. These people were selected based attendance prior to our shut down. Responses were to gauge the opinions of a sample of our congregation. We care about what everyone thinks and are appreciative to all that were willing to share their opinions with us. The results to the survey responses are on the next page.

Congregational Survey about Returning to Worship (One per household)

Under what conditions would you feel comfortable returning to Worship?

- I will stay safer at home until there is a proven vaccine available to everyone, even if that is a year from now.

On a scale of 1-10, with 1 = Not At All and 10 = Completely Comfortable

1. I prefer a better online (live stream) presence
2. Temperature checks outside before anyone enters the building
3. Pews blocked off and/or restricted seating
4. People scheduled to worship on a specific Sunday each month
5. Temporarily changing worship days/times to accommodate attendance restrictions and precautionary measures
6. Masks required for everyone attending (except worship leaders)
7. Physical distancing at all times, including entry and exit (6 feet minimum)
8. No fellowship after worship
9. No congregational singing (Service of the Word format)
10. No Passing of the Peace
11. No passing of the offering plates
12. No Holy Communion
13. Wafer only Continuous Holy Communion (6 feet distance between recipients)

