



DECEMBERS FOOD PANTRY DONATION

RLC Newsletter

January 2021

A Message from Pastor Allman

On social media, television, radio and in person there have been plenty of comments about looking forward to the end of 2020. Wouldn't it be nice if we could wake on January 1, 2021 and all of our troubles, especially this pandemic, would be over? If only it were that simple. Medical experts and epidemiologists have predicted that we will be well into summer by the time a sufficient number of vaccines have reached the USA to create a herd immunity. Some say that we will not reach pre-pandemic normalcy until November 2021. All of that depends on 70%-80% of our population getting the vaccine; although currently only 40% of our population have said they will.

That does not mean that we should despair. It means that there is a light at the end of the tunnel; and it is a short tunnel

indeed. If you have been watching the Bible studies on YouTube, Facebook, or our website then you know what the Jews endured during the Babylonian exile according to the Prophets (first readings on Sundays). They were held captive for approximately 70 years. It was likely the grandchildren and great grandchildren who were allowed to return to Jerusalem and Judea. We are not yet even one year into these pandemic precautions.

Perhaps our impatience, at least in part, comes from our desires for instant gratification. From the time of the invention of the microwave and fast food restaurants our need for instant gratification has become more pronounced. Smart phones provide world-wide news in an instant, although the push to get

the news out first often means it is less accurate. Online retail shopping is pushing to have same day delivery; and, if it comes the next day people are calling to complain. People keep looking for ways to make everything faster and faster, while at the same time complaining that they do not have enough time.

Psalm 46:10 reads, "Be still, and know that I am God!" Yet our hurry-up nature resists God's command to "Be still!" Even when we make the effort to sit still, our minds are marking off all of the things we could be doing. Even during the isolation times of the pandemic people are grieving things they could be doing. Many I know have commented that they were finally able to finish some projects around the house because of the pandemic.

I wonder what drives us to be humans-doing instead of humans-being. Is our selfworth dependent on our accomplishments rather than on our relationship with God? Everyone has to answer for themselves, although when my journey on this world comes to an end, I hope people talk more about my love for God and others than my accomplishments.

What will your relationship with God look like in 2021?



Pastor Allman †

News from the Office Administrator

January 2021

Here I am in mid-December writing an article for 2021! None of us could have imagined the way 2020 has turned out, with reinventing ourselves, worship and daily life. Some of us have had COVID-19 hit close to home. Both of my Florida sons tested positive for the virus the end of November, so we had a quarantine period at our home. Fortunately, their symptoms were very minor and my husband and I remained virus free. We are now all back to work, happily. I am hoping that 2021 is a happier year. With news of the vaccine coming soon that feels hopeful. Please remain vigilant and safe.

It is wonderful to see so many faces here on Sunday morning! We have missed seeing you. We are limiting in-person attendance to 50 people, so please call ahead and reserve your spot, Monday-Thursday from 9:00 AM-1:00 PM, Friday 9:00 AM-12:00 PM.

Our livestream of the Sunday morning service continues for those who prefer to worship from home. This is a great way to be part of the service while also staying safe. We are excited to be able to continue to offer this even as we are able to gather again for in-person worship. If you are having difficulty getting the livestream on your computer, please give us a call for assistance. Kadie emails the bulletin during the week for the following Sunday to our distribution list. If you are not receiving this email, please give the office a call and make sure we have a correct email address for you. The email includes information on how to connect to the live stream. We want as many people as possible to be able to be a part of worship in this way.

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. Our first priority is the safety and wellbeing of all of you, so please be good to yourselves.

JANUARY

STEWARDSHIP

The world-wide pandemic of 2020 was hard on everyone all around the world. Some small businesses have been forced to close permanently. Some states in the USA have experienced periods of lockdown. Some countries experienced such high increases in new positive tests for COVID that the whole country locked-down. People of faith all over the world are praying for a better coming year, while congregations abstain from in-person worship and/or face limited attendance and precautions due to guidelines and recommendations from epidemiologists and national church bodies.

The Body of Christ here at Redeemer has remained faithful. Despite the barriers caused by this pandemic you have continued to give of your time, talent and treasures. This is a testimony of God's faithfulness and our trust in God. The Bible is filled with examples of how God's people have faced hard times which often resulted in growing stronger in their faith.

Stewardship is a way of life, responding to God's graciousness by returning a portion of our time, talents and treasures to build God's Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. You have stayed committed to your baptismal promises, and the promises you made during your Affirmation of Baptism service, a.k.a. Confirmation. On behalf of the leadership here at Redeemer, Thank You!

We look forward to 2021 and God's Grace, despite the ongoing problems of the pandemic. We are grateful to God that there is a light at the end of the tunnel, as vaccines are beginning to be distributed. We trust in Jesus' closing words just prior to the Ascension, "Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Mt. 28:20, NRSV).

SUNDAY WORSHIP ASSISTANTS



Jan. 3 – Hal Wold

Jan. 10 – Jim Schwartz

Jan. 17 – Wendy Kitzman

Jan. 24 – Janice Walsh

Jan. 31- Debbie Andrews

Please call Carolyn Cole if you would like to read on Sunday. 813-812-7527



GROWING IN FAITH

In his book, *A Testament of Devotion*, Thomas Kelly writes, “We feel honestly the pull of many obligations and try to fulfill them all. And we are unhappy, uneasy, strained, oppressed, and fearful we shall be shallow.” Devotion means living out of what Kelly calls, “*The Divine Center*.”



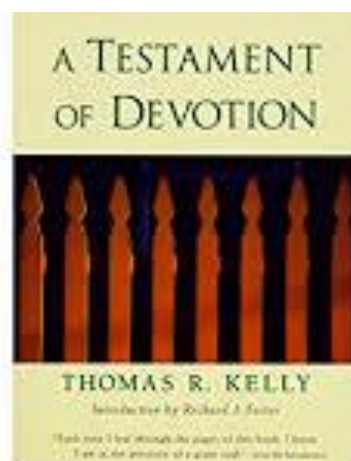
When asked which is the greatest commandment, Jesus responded, “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.*’ This is the greatest and first commandment” (Mt. 22:37-38, emphasis added). Would you say that God is your first and highest love? Would you say that you love God with everything in you?



Sometimes when I ask people to describe their relationship with God, they answer with words similar to “*I know that God is always there.*” Frankly that tells me about God’s relationship to them, not their relationship to God. Think about how my wife might feel if someone asked me to describe my relationship with her and I responded, “*I know that my wife is always there.*” It may sound like I am taking my wife for granted. When someone asks about my relationship with my wife, they are asking about how much I love her. When I ask about someone’s relationship with God, I am asking about how much that person loves God; does their love for God fit well within the greatest commandment?

One does not have to be a monk or a nun to live a life rooted and grounded in love for God. Living out of the Divine Center will mean making God your first and highest love every day. Martin Luther describes this as daily “*...we rise up to live before God in righteousness and purity*” (Small Catechism). If we truly believe that God is always there for us, is it too much to ask that we always be there for God?

Retired people are some of the busiest people I know, and they also have the most freedom to do what they want with their time. The truth is even people who are not yet retired seem to be able to find time for what we want to do. Devotion, living out of the Divine Center, means choosing to spend time with God. Before we can commit to spending time with God, we have to want to, with a love that places God first and highest.



From Parish Nurse Team

Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine

We understand that some people may be concerned about getting vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine. While these vaccines are being developed as quickly as possible, routine processes and procedures remain in place to ensure the safety of any vaccine that is authorized or approved for use. Safety is a top priority, and there are many reasons to get vaccinated.



FACT: COVID-19 vaccines will not give you COVID-19

COVID-19 vaccination will help keep you from getting COVID-19

- COVID-19 vaccines are carefully evaluated in clinical trials and are authorized or approved only if they make it substantially less likely you'll get COVID-19.
- Based on what we know about vaccines for other diseases, experts believe that getting the vaccine may help keep you from getting seriously ill even if you do get COVID-19.
- Getting vaccinated yourself may also protect people around you, particularly people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- Experts continue to conduct more studies about the effect of COVID-19 vaccination on severity of illness from COVID-19, as well as its ability to keep people from spreading the virus that causes COVID-19.

COVID-19 vaccination will be a safer way to help build protection

- COVID-19 can have serious, life-threatening complications, and there is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you. And if you get sick, you could spread the disease to others.
- Clinical trials of COVID-19 vaccines must first show they are safe and effective before any vaccine can be authorized or approved for use. The known and potential benefits of a COVID-19 vaccine must outweigh the known and potential risks of the vaccine..
- Getting COVID-19 may offer some natural protection, known as immunity. But experts don't know how long this protection lasts, and the risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 far outweighs any benefits of natural immunity. COVID-19 vaccination will help protect you by creating an antibody response without having to experience sickness.

COVID-19 vaccination will be an important tool to help stop the pandemic

- Wearing masks and social distancing help reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others, but these measures are not enough. Vaccines will work with your immune system so it will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed.
- Current vaccine is over 90% effective.
- The combination of getting vaccinated and following CDC recommendations of wearing a mask and social distancing will offer the best protection from COVID-19.

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 3rd – Howie Warfield**
- 7th – Marlene Scharback**
- 8th – Richard Meredith**
- 10th– Mary Ann Romano**
- 12th– Shari Fleming**
- 14th –Dorothy Earl**
- 15th – David Cockerham**
- 17th – Janine Johnson, Jon Ruse,
Janet Thompson**
- 20th - Mary Ihrke**
- 22nd –Miriam Zane**
- 23rd – Dieter Quitsch, Jane Sturmer**
- 25th – Nancy Almaguer**
- 26th – Noreen Thompson**
- 27th – Ruth Balagna**



JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 1st – Elmer & Betty Mack**
- 2nd – David & Deya Schierenbeck**
- 11th – Jay & Audrey King**
- 21st – Kay & Dale Lyndahl**
- 26th – Dieter & Judy Quitsch**
- 27th – Nancy & Bill Frey**



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



Christmas gift bag

It was so nice to see everyone that came by to pick up their gift bags. Thanks to all of our volunteers for our Christmas bag project. Marion Giblin's beautiful artwork was used for our cards, thank you Marion. Thank you to the volunteers that made this project possible. Items were purchased, picked up, assembled, and many were delivered all thanks to volunteers.

The two winners for our \$10 Publix gift cards were Myrna Strom and Marjorie Mingst.



Above: Vern and Verbal Loepp kindly delivered to Kings Point

Below: Eva and Vlado Michna prepare to deliver gift bags



Wendy and Jack Kitzman are ready for gift bag delivery



Prayers needed

We have many members and friends of the congregation that are in need of prayers. Of course they are not the only ones, but we ask that you please keep them in your prayers.

Social Ministry & Benevolence

We do not have any benevolence or social ministry projects for the upcoming months.

Our Social Ministry team is still without a chair. Many of you include money for these projects when you give to the church. Any money that comes in for benevolence or social ministry will go to the food pantry. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the office.



Nancy Carrier delivers food and a check from Redeemer to Tom Bullaro at Our Lady's Pantry.

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

Please remember, NO open packages or containers.



Thank you

Candy, Noah and I wish to thank everyone for their prayers, well wishes, cards, gifts, and sweet treats during the Christmas holidays.

Redeemer staff would also like to thank everyone for the cards, gifts, and sweet treats you have shared with us this Christmas.

Support for others

(Collection boxes are on the narthex counter)



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>