



## **Redeemer Lutheran Church Newsletter**

July, 2023

### **Pastor Ponderings**

**Pastor Jack Way**

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In the recent practice interview with Rev. Michael Lee, from Common Ground Church in Lodi, Pastor Lee sent feedback to the call committee for their prayerful consideration. The committee was invited to discard, challenge, amend, expand or affirm the feedback provided.

Included within his perspectives about Redeemer were these following categories. Hospitality, Questions, Motivation, Qualifications, Stewardship of Vocation (before Resources and Funding), and Funding. Pastor Lee included positive feedback specifically related to everything he experienced and observed prior to, during and concluding his “mock” interview. He began with the ease, or with confusion, he had from the time he arrived in Redeemer’s parking lot. Then he gave feedback about his initial contact with individual(s) followed by introductions of the committee members. His observations continue through the meeting, until he and the committee ended their time together. Pastor Lee is very skilled at observing, reviewing, discussing and clarifying ideas and concepts. He is a wealth of knowledge about resources that can be used by the committee to aid in the process of discernment. Discernment, in the church of Jesus Christ, through the theological perspective of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, is the seeking and listening for God’s Holy Spirit to provide clarity about the “Mission of God” here at Redeemer at this time in its history.

From the ELCA website (ELCA.org) – DISCERNMENT PROCESS, Pastor Lee listed three questions to be considered by the call committee on behalf of the congregation.

- What is God’s hope and dream for you?
- In what ways are you strong and unique?
- Would your neighborhood miss you if you were gone?

Beginning within that framework, then he suggested the call committee consider these three things to think about, pray about and discuss together.

- Why do you (Redeemer) exist and for whom? What would someone who observes you (Redeemer) from the outside conclude about your sense of purpose and mission?
- What are you (Redeemer) clearly good at? What ministry activities bring out the best in you and seem to be valued by others (both outside and within the congregation)?
- What does your neighborhood really need right now, and how are you (Redeemer) helping to meet those needs?

Additionally, Pastor Lee offered a resource for a style of interview questioning called “behavioral questioning” to aid in expanding the perspective of the call committee as they prepare to engage for (whenever) an interview of a pastoral candidate will occur. He also provided a resource for the call committee to investigate and consider how they might interview a pastoral candidate about how the candidate would use and lead from the concept of “adaptive leadership”. Following the pandemic, along with the changes within our society regarding the need within the local community to provide automatic support for congregations to exist and/or flourish, has us living with a multiple decades long and ongoing trend of decline for congregations of all sizes. The styles of leadership, in which very many pastor’s were educated, continues to regularly fall short with many of the needs of declining congregations in less supportive communities. This is especially noticeable in times of chaotic and unexpected changes happening within and around local congregations.

Pastor Lee wrote, "Most local congregations are aware that this[loss of community support, congregational decline, and new/different leadership requirements] is the case but assume that if they do what they've always done in the past but better and improved, longer hours, new pastor, etc., that things will turn around. No matter what congregations have done well in the past, it wasn't the reason for their success. How might the Holy Spirit be the primary agent of transformation in our stories as congregations even as we face significant challenges? Meaning our focus is on God not what we don't have during this time of change or [on] our attempts at reviving what we lost during this time of cultural flux. What about the new thing that God is doing with Redeemer?"

*I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." Isaiah 43:19*

Pastor Lee continues with, "Being church in today's world is easier said than done but at the end of the day, God loves us and enjoys our company (Jesus = God with us). Meaning before we are members of a local congregation, we are God's beloved as persons in the world God so loves! So, I encourage the congregational council, call committee, and mission partners of Redeemer to enjoy God's presence with you during this time. You are an amazing community of faith with extraordinary strengths for what God is already up to in the Rio area."

May Pastor Michael Lee's prophetic words of comfort, of praise, of reflection and of challenge be prayed upon as the Holy Spirit leads Redeemer to become God in Christ Jesus' "new thing".

*With you a brother in Christ, for you a shepherd of Christ*

**Pastor Jack**

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### **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

What's Happening at Redeemer Lutheran Church?

Sunday June 25<sup>th</sup>, we had a celebration for our Seniors who graduated from High School, and we also recognized our sprouts. Our seniors that graduated were Ashley Laufenberg, Morgan Reiersen and Lily Walker. Each graduate received a new hymnal with their name embossed on the cover and a tied blanket. Ashley Laufenberg received Redeemer's General Scholarship and the Willis Hinzman scholarship. Congratulations Ashley!

Redeemer's sprouts received age-appropriate Bibles. Our Sprouts are Leslie Berndt, Amelia Maynard, Emily Laufenberg, Cooper Husom, Emma Dahnke, Abby Dahnke, Odessa Roat, Luisa Roat, and Brenwyn Moe. Redeemer's Call Committee has had a meeting with the Synod. At this meeting they performed a mock interview with a pastor. We are still waiting to receive a call from the Synod.

Pastor Jack and the Council have signed another six-month letter of Agreement along with the Synod. The terms of that agreement run from July 1<sup>st</sup> till December 31, 2023. Pastor Jack is on a 50% contract with no increase in pay.

Redeemer's property committee has been busy fine tuning the new sound system.

The Property committee has been working on submitting an Insurance claim for hail damage to the church. The damage occurred during the hailstorm that hit Rio on April 19<sup>th</sup>.

We want to give thanks to the anonymous donor who has repaired and re-sided the outdoor storage shed.

Important dates to keep in mind for things that are happening at Redeemer:

- Monday July 10<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday July 12<sup>th</sup>, and Friday July 14<sup>th</sup> we will be serving Lunch on the Library Lawn. Redeemer is partnering with Bonnet Prairie on this Outreach event.
- Our Sunday service on July 16<sup>th</sup> will be “Christmas in July.”
- Sunday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> will be the community service in the Park with a pot luck lunch served after the service.
- Sunday August 6<sup>th</sup>, we will have a “Luau” service outside. So, bring your lawn chairs and join our festivities.

In God’s Service,

*Larry Gorman*

Council President

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### **FROM A MEMBER**

It has been some time since I have had an article in the Newsletter. I seem to be having some issues with my computer, so I will try again.

#### **ARE WE REMNANTS?**

What is a remnant? Something left over when we sew, as a piece of cloth? A remnant could be a conversation that was never finished and needs to be completed. What exactly is a remnant?

Are we at Redeemer remnants of the members who have gone before us, such as relatives, good friends, Pastors or other leaders in our congregation who started our church? Are we a remnant of God’s people? We need to consider these questions and more to understand what God has in store for us.

In the Bible there was Noah, Moses and the 7000 Jews who refused to worship a false God, were all remnants. Paul writes in Romans that “there is a remnant according to the election of grace.” What does God do with these remnants? What can we see from these examples that may shed some light on what God has in store for us at Redeemer?

There is a common thread – that God uses all remnants. These remnants may become the foundation devoted to God and his redemptive work.

We need to become witnesses to God’s great grace and His continuing work of redemption. This can serve as a lighthouse for us to see our way in the mist of the confusion that we are experiencing now.

We, as members of Redeemer, are a remnant. We are being led through a time of questioning and not every remnant is the same. Maybe this is what we have to experience to make Redeemer whole again. It’s exciting and yet humbling at the same time to think that God has been working in each of us to accomplish His specific will. We don’t know what lies ahead, but we do know this – God IS leading us. Now we need to pray that we will have the courage, strength and determination to follow. Could it be that He’s already told us our purpose for being a remnant? Let’s pray and see where he leads us.



### **Call Committee Report:**

Larry Gorman reported from an e-mail he received from Beth Laufenberg: “We are in the same place as last time – waiting for a candidate. We met with Marie Leafblad to talk about the interviewing process. We got together last week (week of May 8) to finalize questions to ask in an interview. I will be sending those to Marie today (May 15) for her review. In the near future we will be having a mock interview to practice. At this point we do not have any potential candidates, but that could change at any time.”

### **Consent Agenda (below items approved in one motion)**

#### **Financial Reports for:**

a. **General Fund:** Rick Olson

We did not have to transfer any money last month

c. **Bennett Mutual Fund:** Rick Olson

Larry suggested taking \$10,000 out to invest in a CD at F&M Bank for 1 year, As the interest rate is 4.1% at this time. That would leave \$17,000 in the Fund.

Rick Olson made a motion to do so. Seconded by Barb Von Ahsen. Motion carried.

All were in favor.

d. **Memorial Fund:** Rick Olson

#### **Standing Committee Reports for:**

d. **Property:** Dean Roberts reported that the team is looking at pressure washing the church and re-staining the deck at the parsonage; fixing the space heater in the office; and putting up a paper towel holder by the 2<sup>nd</sup> sink in the kitchen. The siding for the shed (to match the new siding on the church) has been ordered. There was a discussion about the roof and whether or not to replace the missing shingles. They would like to wait until the whole church needs re-roofing and do it all at once.

e. **WELCA:** Debbie Reiersen

f. **Social Concerns:** Lynn Bubolz

g. **Outreach:** Steve Gilbert

h. **Stewardship:** Rick Olson

i. **Lay Ministry:** Barb Von Ahsen

j. **Education:** Debbie

k. **Worship team:** Kristi Fehrman asked for council to consider how we might handle worship in the future on those Sundays that Pastor is off. Do we continue with lay people developing a message or do we look for other avenues? If we continue with lay people, should they be reimbursed in some way for the time and effort involved. Some suggestions included: worship at Bonnet Prairie, having outside speakers like someone from Hope Haven, or someone from the Synod. No decisions – this will be on the Agenda next month.

Kristi reported that the worship team is preparing to recognize Sprouts with Bibles and recognize graduates with an embossed ELW Hymnal and a blanket – tentative date is Sunday, June 25

I. **Policy Committee:** Steve Gilbert reported that the team last met in February, and with Lent and other obligations have not met since.

Motion was made by Steve Gilbert to accept financial and standing committee reports. Seconded by Rick Olson. Motion carried. All were in favor.

## **8. Staff Reports:**

### **a. Pastor's Report**

Pastor Jack Way gave a verbal report:

- Pastor gave thanks for Music Sunday and all of those involved. He was very pleased and received positive feedback.
- We have started putting portions of the Liturgy from the Hymnal back into worship
- Pastor, Rick, and Linda Olson will be attending the Synod Assembly in Mt. Horeb this week. Rick Olson made a motion to approve \$100 as an offering at the assembly. Seconded by Steve Gilbert. Motion carried. All were in favor.
- Reminder that there is no service at Redeemer on May 28. Bonnet Prairie is having a memorial day service at the cemetery at 9:30. If bad weather, it will be in the church.
- Pastor asked if we should consider holding one or two outdoor services this summer. If we do, will we have communion? Kristi stated that our pre-packaged communion cups (both grape juice and wine) are on back-order and are getting harder to obtain. This will be on the Agenda next month.
- Recent/upcoming funerals: Barb Brewer, Marie Nobbs, Don Hohlstein, and Todd Walker (tentatively June 10)
- The Neighborhood Table was brought up at the RACA meeting to see if they would be willing to take it over. It is currently under consideration.
- Friendly Souls – Steve was able to provide Pastor with some documentation from the past and how it worked at that time. More consideration will be needed.
- Scholarships – we have one individual, Ashley Laufenberg. We will recognize her at the same time as the Sprouts and Graduates.
- Conflict within a Church – Pastor found 2 books regarding church conflict, 1) *Conflict and Christian Life*, by Sam Partaro; and *Transforming Conflict: The Blessings of Congregational Turmoil*, by Terasa Cooley. He will review both and determine if either would be of benefit to Redeemer. He has also been in contact with an individual at the Synod who has experience in dealing with the issue.

e. **Other Staff Members:**

**Old Business:**

- a. **Master Calendar:** Reviewed updates from last month. Several more were made. Kristi will give notes to Debbie to update the draft for next month.
- b. **Update Sound System:** On course for being completed by June 2
- c. **Neighborhood Table:** Reported on in Pastor's Report
- d. **Friendly Souls:** Reported on in Pastor's Report
- e. **Pew Cards:** Pastor has been checking with other churches – nothing new to report.
- f. **Gift Cards Fund Raiser:** Lynn – tabled until next month in Lynn's absence

**New Business:**

a. **Pastor's Letter of Agreement**

Larry Gorman reported that the Executive board met on May 8 and are presenting a new contract to run from 7/1/2023 – 12/31/2023. Salary remains the same. He can break the contract with 2 weeks notice; Redeemer can break the contract with 2 weeks notice; or the Synod can call him to serve another church with 2 weeks notice. The contract is being sent to Marie Leafblad at the Synod for approval.

b. **Church Pictorial Directory**

1. Develop a committee to review the current directory (list of members). We have a brochure from an individual who has promoted directories for a number of years. *Tabled until next month.* Council members were asked to consider who, from our congregation, might be good candidates to be on a committee to contact individuals on the delicate subject of membership

c. **Financial report for newsletter**

It was agreed that a financial report is due for the Newsletter. Larry will ask Beth to provide an update through May for the June Newsletter.

**Thanksgivings:** Thanks to all the Music staff, Sprout staff and all the participants for the wonderful Music Sunday on May 7<sup>th</sup>. Pastor also gave many thanks for the volunteers for our recent funerals in coming forward to assist.

**Adjourn/Closing Prayer.**

Motion was made by Steve Gilbert to Adjourn the meeting at 8:05 pm. Seconded by Rick Olson. Motion carried. All were in favor. Followed by the Lord's Prayer.

**Dates To Remember: Next Council meeting-June 19<sup>th</sup> @ 6:00 P.M., Devotions: Barb VonAhsen will also preside over the meeting in Larry's absence.**

Kristi Fehrman  
Acting Secretary in Debbie Reiersen's absence



## **July Birthdays**

Jessica Corning	July 2
Jeremy Jaynes	July 5
April Severson	July 5
Dennis Brusveen	July 10
Benjamin Brusveen	July 16
Brian Brewer	July 17
Rhonda Corning	July 17
Chainey Brewer	July 21

## **July Anniversaries**

*None that we are aware of*

### **Redeemer Lutheran Church – WELCA**

WELCA Special meeting. June 4, 2023. 10:00 AM

The meeting was called to order into name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The purpose statement was read.

The purpose of the meeting was to fill the treasurer position because of the passing of Dianna Pryse. There was discussion on how to accomplish this. Beth Laufenberg has offered to help.

A motion was made by Helen Risgaard to have Beth Laufenberg pay the WELCA bills with guidance as to when bills are due and Kristie Falk will be the backup. Beth Laufenberg and Kristie Falk will be authorized signers on the FMUB checking account (xxx0764). One signature required. Seconded by Nancy Wescott. Sherri Kranz, Nancy Wescott, Helen Risgaard – yes; Debbie Reiersen – abstained. MC

Adah/Esther circle is no longer active so it was decided to discontinue having cards and napkins for now.

Motion by Debbie Reiersen to adjourn. Seconded by Helen Risgaard. MC

Nancy Wescott, Secretary

### **FINANCIAL UPDATE**

Will be coming soon in a bulletin insert.

## Call Committee Corner

Please see the most current information in the President's and Pastor's articles.

The Call Committee asks for your continued support and Prayers.

Call Committee Members:

Beth Laufenberg  
Austin Dahnke  
Bob Risgaard  
Bob Skare

Darlene Cutsforth  
Judy Sandberg  
Trish McNeill  
Pam Jaynes (alternate)

### **Salty Strings Music Ministry**

There will be a free concert on Sunday, July 30 from 1:00-2:00 pm at the Historic Indian Agency House lawn, 1490 Agency House Road, Portage.

John and Connie Nicholas will perform many of the hymns that were popular nearly 200 years ago, accompanied by the unique sounds of a fascinating variety of unusual historical instruments.

Invite friends, bring your favorite lawn chair, and enjoy!

There are posters in the Narthex and at the side entrance about this event.

<https://saltystings.com/>    [www.agencyhouse.org/enduring-skills](http://www.agencyhouse.org/enduring-skills)

# JULY

**Sun**

**Mon**

**Tue**

**Wed**

**Thu**

**Fri**

<b>2</b>  9:00 Worship  Facebook, YouTube FM 101.7	<b>3</b> Pastor's Office Hours: 9:30 - Noon	<b>4</b>  Office Closed	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Pastor available By appointment  7:00 pm- AA Meeting	<b>7</b>  Pastor's Sabbath Day
<b>9</b>  9:00 Worship  Facebook, YouTube FM 101.7	<b>10</b> Pastor's Office Hours: 9:30 - Noon  Lunch on the Library Lawn	<b>11</b> Pastor's Office Hours: 1:00 – 3:30  Worship Team Meeting 9:15	<b>12</b>  Lunch on the Library Lawn	<b>13</b> Pastor available By appointment  7:00 pm- AA Meeting	<b>14</b>  Pastor's Sabbath Day  Lunch on the Library Lawn
<b>16</b> 9:00 Worship <i>Christmas in July</i>  Facebook, YouTube FM 101.7	<b>17</b> Pastor's Office Hours: 9:30 – Noon  Council Meeting 6:00	<b>18</b> Pastor's Office Hours: 1:00 – 3:30	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> Pastor available By appointment  10:30 Worship at Covenant House  7:00 pm- AA Meeting	<b>21</b>  Pastor's Sabbath Day
<b>23</b> 10:00 am Ecumenical Service at the Park Pastor Jack Preaching <i>No Worship at                  Redeemer</i>	<b>24</b> Pastor's Office Hours: 9:30 - Noon	<b>25</b> Pastor's Office Hours: 1:00 – 3:30	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> Pastor available By appointment  <i>August Newsletter                  Articles Due</i>  7:00 pm- AA Meeting	<b>28</b>  Pastor's Sabbath Day
<b>30</b> 9:00 Worship  Facebook, YouTube FM 101.7	<b>31</b> Pastor's Office Hours: 9:30 - Noon				

**REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**610 LINCOLN AVE**  
**RIO, WISCONSIN 53960**  
**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

*“To Live and tell the story of Jesus”*  
[www.rioredeemerlutheran.org](http://www.rioredeemerlutheran.org)

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Redeemer Lutheran Church-Rio, WI

**Staff & Council Contacts**

**REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH**

If you have any comments or needs that should be addressed, please contact our leadership:

**THE CHURCH COUNCIL**

Larry Gorman (President)	(920) 992-3213
Barb Von Ahsen (Vice president)	(920) 992-3860
Debbie Reiersen (Secretary)	(608) 347-1952
Rick Olson (Treasurer)	(920) 992-5418
Kristi Fehrman (Trustee)	(608) 837-8144
Steve Gilbert (Trustee)	(920) 992-5219
Lynn Bubolz (Trustee)	(920) 992-3494
Dean Roberts (Trustee)	920))992-5675
Robert Risgaard (Bennett Treasurer)	(920) 992-5258
Geri Gorman (Memorial Treasurer)	(920) 992-3213

**Interim Pastor Jack Way**

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**Kristi Fehrman – Interim Administrative**

**Assistant - Office # (920) 992-3553**

E-mail: [office@rioredeemerLutheran.org](mailto:office@rioredeemerLutheran.org)

**Beth Laufenberg - Bookkeeper**

**April Severson - Custodian**

**Kurt Johnson - Yard Maintenance**

**Geri Gorman - Music Director**

**Gayle Krueger - Choir accompanist**

**Claudine Hanson - Organist**