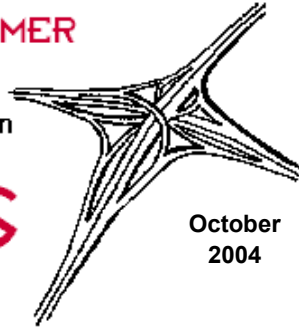




CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

A Christian Liberation Community  
in the Episcopal Tradition

CROSSROADS



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## I Am Going to Africa

*by Phillip Wilson*

In the middle of my sabbatical seven months ago, I woke up one morning with the thought that if I had the chance to plan this all over again I would have done something to put me out of my comfort zone. I would have spent the three months in Africa.

During the three months in California, England, Scotland and the Netherlands, I visited churches looking for life and energy and new ways of expressing them in worship. I did find some examples of life, such as the Iona Community in Scotland and St. Gregory of Nyssa and Glide Memorial both in San Francisco. More often I found a churches that were boring, dead and dying. I wish I had gone to Africa to see how people without the wealth and resources of the Western world celebrate life and hold on to hope within worship.

Returning to teach once again at Drew Theological Seminary, I found right in front of me a way to go to Africa. The Rev. Dr. E. Obiri Addo, one of the four co-teachers with me is leading a trip to Ghana and Togo in January from Jan. 2-14, 2005. Obiri is a Ghanaian-American and will introduce people on this trip to the culture of Ghana and the lives of individual people. He would put me in the home of a Ghanaian pastor for a number of days to experience life as it is lived.

I, also, want to visit the "slave castles" where black men, women and children were held to be shipped to the Americas to be sold as slaves.

I want to step out of the world of America and Europe in which I am so comfortable and enjoy such privilege. I want to feel what happens to my soul when I get to know people who lives are truly different from mine.

I will be at Redeemer for the January 2, 2005 service and fly to Amsterdam that night to make a connection to a flight to Ghana. I will return on Friday January 14, 2005 and be in church for the Martin Luther King service on January 16, 2005. Elizabeth Kaeton, rector of St. Paul's, Chatham, who is one of my co-teachers will also be going on the same trip.

Isn't it interesting how the stirrings within your heart can be heard? I could how I would ever get to Africa. Sometime the answer just falls in your lap if you wait long enough. I will take plenty of pictures and, my guess, is that the effects of this trip will be felt in sermons.

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## The Body of God: Creation

*by Sr. Shane Margaret*

Redeemer is unique among Episcopal churches in its dedication of a liturgical season to the theme of creation. Fall seems an ideal time to celebrate the glory of creation, as the solid green of summer gives way to yellow, red, orange, and brown. Harvest time offers a chance for gratitude and reverence for the bounty of the earth. The feast day of St. Francis, that famous lover of God's creation, is October 4, so many churches have a blessing of the animals that week. Blue skies and wheat-colored meadows lead me to my own time of thanksgiving. Psalm 65 comes alive for me: "You have crowned the year with your bounty and your paths overflow with a rich harvest; the untilled meadows overflow with abundance, and rejoicing clothes the hills. The fields are covered with flocks and the valleys are blanketed with grain. They shout and sing for joy!"

This joy is not a simple thing, however. Along with the beauty of creation and thanks for the abundance of the earth, Creation Season calls us to learn about and turn from the abuse we inflict on the planet. We who have so much to be grateful for must acknowledge the high cost of the American lifestyle. Creation Season can be a time for us to engage in healing and reconciliation with the earth. I believe that this healing is an essential part of contemporary spiritual growth. A spirituality that rests on privilege and does not use that privilege for change is barren.

When we see the universe as the "body of God" (in Sally McFague's resonant phrase), we see both the glory of God and the damage we do. Just as God is visible in the faces of those we meet, God appears in the trees and the squirrels, the rain and the sun. And just as I must ask whether I can see Jesus in the people I meet, I must consider how I am treating the creator who gives me life and sustains me.

On October 23 we will have the fall parish retreat at the convent. We will spend a day giving thanks for creation, celebrating the God who makes it happen, and confronting our part in the damage done to the earth we love. Our goal is not to "feel bad," but to renew a right relationship with the earth and look for creative solutions. I hope you will join me for a day of celebration, reflection, and renewal. If you can't join us, make sure to take time to enjoy the season!

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## The Racial Dialog Group's New Year

*by a Congregant*

As my co-leader and I undertake the mission of Redeemer's Racial Dialog Group, we spent the summer looking into what the parish's needs are, what we thought worked well with the group in the past, and where we thought we could make a more positive impact. You can read our new mission statement in this issue.

We believe both individuals and the community contribute equally to society's practice of racism, and so to fulfill its mission, the RDG provides two venues. The Genesis group meets monthly for individuals to explore the personal elements of racism in open and constructive dialog. Through December, Genesis meets Fridays at 7pm, October 8, November 12, and December 10 in the Parlor. Special social events, listed below, offer an opportunity for individuals to seek ways outside of themselves to witness the history, effects and manifestations of racism in society. For these, anyone is welcome to come to monthly planning meetings, scheduled for Saturdays at 10am, October 2, November 6 and December 4, to help organize and facilitate these events, and brainstorm on new events relevant to our community.

There is an obvious flow between these two venues, and we hope parish members will feel comfortable attending one or both, depending on their level of comfort.

Upcoming RDG events so far scheduled or in the planning include:

- October 24 matinee theater trip to The McCarter Theater's Polk County, including lunch and a post performance discussion with company members.
- Two-day Diversity Training session, hosted by Redeemer, sponsored by the diocese, January 21 and 22.
- Renowned Guest Speaker Eddie Glaud preaches on January 23, following with a special luncheon and entertainment.
- Observing the 60th Anniversary of D-Day in May 2005 with black veterans of World War 2 in a discussion of their lives in and out of the service during this quintessentially American era.

The most important thing about RDG is that we are not about shame or guilt, or blame. We are about helping each other and allowing ourselves to recognize racism and injustice where it is, finding our own place in it, and where on our own journey we happen to be. For some or most, these are difficult paths for sure. But we know we do not grow unless we accept that our comfort zone will be challenged, and that's what life should be. Our mission, like most of Redeemer's, is nothing less striving for a more perfect vision of life.

We are thankful to all those who have brought us thus far on the journey, and we look forward to all of you who will continue with us, in any capacity, toward this more perfect world. Contact John Ostrander ..... or Jon DeAngelis (ednjon@optonline.net; 973 635 7566) for any comments, suggestions, or more information.

### ***The Mission Statement of the Racial Dialog Group***

*The Racial Dialog Group is a ministry of the Church of the Redeemer, sharing the vision and mission of our church community. We fully promote the concept that all humans are of one race. We follow the belief that the genesis of racism is not biological but learned by the individual, and that its manifestation is in society. We believe addressing both the individual effects and the social dynamics that allow racism to happen are equally critical to any success in diminishing its destructive power.*

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## **Healing Prayer - Journey to Wholeness**

Every other week or so, the 10:30 Eucharist includes healing prayer for all who want it. Some people come up every time laying-on-of-hands is offered; others may just feel a need for strength at a certain time. To those who are new to Redeemer, and even to some who are not so new, healing prayer may seem to be an unlikely project to emerge from such an activist, political parish. For those who participate, however, it is part of the larger mission of Redeemer to bring about justice and reconciliation. Our "journey to wholeness" must include both social change and individual healing if it is to be the way of peace.

The roots of the Healing Prayer Group go back to long-range planning discussions held in 2000 and 2001. At those discussions people had urged that Redeemer increase its focus on spirituality. The group began meeting in the fall of 2001, with guidance and advice from then-seminarian Dennie Bennett. Dennie recommended reading Agnes Sanford's *The Healing Light* and Avery Brooke's *Healing in the Landscape of Prayer* as a way to think about starting a healing ministry. The group discussed each member's experiences of prayer and healing, and found that for many Redeemer was already a place of healing simply by being welcoming and accepting.

In the fall of 2002 Dennie and a congregant attended a workshop given by Joy Carol, author of several books on healing. Joy stresses that we are not the healers, and that our job is to get out of God's way to let healing move through us and around us. This point is essential for everyone involved in healing prayer. Nothing blocks energy like ego. The more we want to help, and think it's up to us, the less effectively God can work through us. It is crucial for those engaged in this work to maintain regular prayer habits, in order to make ourselves available and to discern the difference between self-will and God's will. The group's regular meetings include silent meditation and time for sharing.

When the group first offered laying on of hands, in Lent of 2003, they were afraid that no one would come up for healing. They even considered having some people in reserve in case no one came up! Instead, the line snaked down the aisle by the chapel, and "held up" the Eucharist. The group quickly adapted to their popularity by providing two stations, as we do now. They began to offer healing prayer every other week, and response has continued to be strong.

The group has deliberately moved slowly in the growth of this ministry. Because "doing it right" is more important than "doing it now," because of the need for individual and group discernment for ministry, the group has been content to let growth come to it rather than to push. We hope that people would like to see more presence for healing prayer, and that people will feel called to this special ministry, but we believe that things grow in their own time.

The Healing Prayer Group meets on the first and third Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in the parlor. Everyone is welcome. You may attend the meetings without doing laying on of hands. If you are interested, please speak to the co-leaders, Lisa Matthews or Trish Shellard, or one of the pastoral staff. Everyone is also welcome to pray with us in the chapel during laying on of hands.

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## **Christian Formation**

DO YOU RECALL ...

a moment in your church experience that made a strong impression, something that moved you, where you were aware of the presence of God? Most people remember such an instance, perhaps during worship while singing a hymn, perhaps during a gathering when someone shared an experience, or perhaps while hearing a story in Sunday school. These are instances of "Christian formation," which occurs constantly in a church setting, because we are always being affected by what happens around us. We can then ask ourselves how intentional we want to be in supporting the process of Christian formation. Or, what steps do we take to ensure that church experiences be positive, satisfying, rewarding, and challenging?

The Christian Formation Commission of our diocese (Newark) has put forth some principles to help us focus on the process. Christian formation is:

- Christ-centered and spirit-filled;
- Holistic and lifelong;
- A sharing of experiences, traditions, gifts, and faith;
- Development of individual formation in reciprocal relationship with community;
- A process that encourages discipleship and bears good fruit; and
- The assumption of appropriate risks to enable growth.

In manifestation of these principles, the Commission sponsors a variety of activities throughout the year, available to all persons in the Diocese of Newark. You may have seen the publicity for Celebrating Creative Congregations last March, which offered workshops on topics in every area of church growth. If you're proposing a new ministry, you should be aware of the Congregational Ministries Directory. Chances are good that someone at another church in the diocese has had a similar idea. These are two examples of the group's work, of its service as resource to churches and parishioners wishing to be intentional about spiritual growth. The Commission can lead you to others with whom you can share experiences, with whom collaboration is possible. We are all here to teach and to learn. We also exist in community with other churches. If you'd like to know more, contact the writer.

*Mary Jane Wilkie has served on the Christian Formation Commission since June of 2003.*

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## Unicef

*by Mary Jane Wilkie*

Hallowe'en and UNICEF Go Hand in Hand

Do you remember when Unicef was a new word at Redeemer? Where were you in October 1995?

Kids: What's the most fun on Hallowe'en? Your costume ... your mask ... eating the food in your Trick-or-Treat bag OR collecting money at Redeemer to send to Unicef?

Adults: What do you remember about your Hallowe'ens?

UNICEF is now 59 years old - the "C" stands for Children.

As a child did you ask yourself "What will I be when I grow up?" In 1990 2.2 million children died, the next year 2.9 million died. Why did they die? No food, no medicine, no doctors and AIDS. They did not have a chance to grow up.

With money from UNICEF there are clinics, mothers attend nutrition classes and bring their children to a health center.

After 9-11, three years ago, two families told me, "September 11 was a wake-up call. I no longer believe that spare change for the Unicef Box is enough. We need GREEN paper money with numbers." They proved it with an extra contribution.

Sunday October 31, 2004 our children will collect for UNICEF.

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## Wind of the Spirit

*by a Congregant Volunteer*

I began my journey with Wind of The Spirit in Spring of 2004. I had previously written my Spanish Professor asking her for advice how to improve my Spanish speaking and comprehension. She wisely suggested becoming a volunteer at a Hispanic Agency as this would immerse me in the Spanish language. I tried e-mailing an agency in Dover that she recommended but got no response. Then I remembered an agency called Wind of The Spirit that came to visit Redeemer once. I e-mailed Larry to ask him for their e-mail address and sent a query type e-mail asking if they had volunteer opportunities for students looking to improve their Spanish speaking abilities. Within a couple of hours, I had received an e-mail from Diana Mejia, the director of Wind of The Spirit with the subject "Claro Que Si" ( Of Course) which invited me to come to the office and talk with her. We met a couple of days later. While I waited for Diana to arrive, I overheard an office ESL class going on. My first thought as I listened to the students struggling to pronounce English words was "This is what I want to do with the rest of my life!". I filled out a volunteer form which surveyed my interests and tentatively used my Spanish to chat with María Eugenia who is the office manager and ESL teacher. As I met with Diana on that fateful day, I never would have guessed how involved I would become and how much my life would change for the better because of the work I do with them.

Wind of The Spirit, an immigrant resource center, recently turned four years old, The agency was founded by Colombian immigrants Diana Mejia and Angel Patino. It is a grassroots organization which has monthly "Colectivo" ( Collective) meetings in which all who are on this board of directors have equal say in the decisions made by the organization. Wind of the Spirit spreads the message that just because many immigrants in Morristown are undocumented, this does not make them "illegals" ( which is how many refer to the day workers in Morristown). They spread the message that every human being has dignity and worth, and that just because they don't have papers doesn't mean that the employers can abuse them. Angel Patino helps workers recover wages when a boss refuses to pay them. Unfortunately this happens more than one might think. He gets about 40 new cases like this a month. Wind of The Spirit in addition to teaching ESL classes, also offers workshops, meetings, and educational programs on safety, immigration, and knowing one's rights. In addition to working locally, they also are working at the national level. Recently they passed out signature cards to petition Congressmen to oppose the CLEAR act, which is an inhumane act concerning immigration soon to be voted on in Congress, as well as supporting another campaign called the DREAM act which an act awaiting vote in Congress that allows Hispanic students without papers to attend college in order to contribute positively to society and work on the process of becoming citizens. Through the local and national channels, they hope to create a world that is more brotherly and more kind.

I started volunteering there once a week helping with written translation type work, from Spanish to English and at times English to Spanish. Once my Spring semester ended, I began being an aide once a week in the ESL classes taught by María Eugenia in addition to my other day working with translation. Not too long after, Diana Mejia approached me about helping her teach English Classes for the day laborers at the Morristown train station. For all of July and August and now into September, I have been teaching Survival English to them, looking for ideas in my old Spanish books as well as on the internet. I would have to say the Street classes are my favorite. I have developed a good rapport with the workers. I trust them and they trust me. Recently I have been teaching them American songs and have been reading them Mexican folktales. Unfortunately, due to the nature of the classes being outside, they will stop once the cold weather comes.

From my experience with Wind of The Spirit, I have become more self confident. It takes a lot of guts to stand in front of a group of guys and speak in a language that is not your own. I have also become more whole. In serving others, I have found my salvation so to speak. Oh, and my Spanish is improving. :-)

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## Interfaith Food Pantry

IT'S TURKEY TIME AT THE FOOD PANTRY!

We try to tell newer members and remind older ones about the Interfaith Food Pantry, for which we donate food and supplies when we go to Communion on Sundays. The need for the Pantry's services continues to increase, so that more than 3 TONS of food and supplies are being distributed to about 200 FAMILIES EACH WEEK. Thus there is greater need for our weekly contributions.

Now it is almost time to contribute turkeys to help meet the need for Thanksgiving "baskets." Last year the Pantry distributed about 1,000 baskets with turkeys, and the need will not be less this year. "Trimnings" such as instant potatoes, stuffing, gravy, roll mix, icing, pie crust, yams, coffee, tea, nuts, etc. are also needed.

The frozen turkeys should be brought to the kitchen in the Parish Hall on SUNDAY NOVEMBER 7 OR 14 - either before or after church. If this is not possible for you, please call the Parish Office at 973-539-0703 to make other arrangements.

Cash or checks are also most welcome.

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## Animal Ministry

*Animals are Such Agreeable Friends-  
They ask no questions,  
They pass no criticisms.....*

*George Eliot*

The October 10th Service will observe the Blessing of our animal companions. It is fitting that this service is held in the month of October because the feast of St. Francis, the patron of the animals, is this month. It is a time when birds, cats, dogs, goldfish, pigs, and other assorted friends join us for Sunday service. The Prayers of the people remind us that all living things are connected, the sermon highlights that relationship, and the animals are blessed after the service. The front of the Church is reserved for individuals that come alone that day. Supplies will be available for clean-up and spills.

This year the Animal Ministry Team, which organizes this service, is anticipating the arrival of the plaque for the Animal Memorial Garden. The plaque, which is styled after the one for the Memorial Garden, will memorialize the companions that are

interred in the Animal Memorial Garden. Thanks to all that made the plaque a reality.

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## **Why We Do What We Do - The Prayers of the People**

*By the Rev. Phillip Wilson*

The Worship Committee, under the leadership of Carol King, meets monthly to advise the rector as to the shape, the content and the style of the worship at Redeemer as we respond to our Vision. Worship is something we take very seriously in this parish. It must reflect our vision and at the same time give voice and direction to our diverse parish family.

It is often asked: why do the Prayers of the People take so long? Why must we listen to concerns and thanksgivings that mean little to us? Why don't the clergy or "upfront" leadership do them more quickly and with greater efficiency?

The Prayers of the People in every church are meant to be a place where voice is given to the concerns and thanksgivings of the people at worship. Often these concerns are expressed in broad generalized categories with specific names of the sick, deceased and those with birthdays given at the end. What we do at Redeemer is to actively invite the members of the parish family to write the concerns and thanksgivings that they feel most deeply. Then we have people (intercessors) literally come out of the congregation in street clothes to pray these concerns and thanksgivings.

Does it make the service a little longer doing the prayers this way? Sure. Do we become impatient listening to concerns that mean little to us? Sometimes. I am convinced that as a family we must fight that impatience. To be "family" means that we take time to listen to each other, we take time to rejoice and to weep with each other.

The Prayers of the People gives us that very opportunity in the middle of our Sunday "family" worship.

That is why we do the Prayers of the People as we do at Redeemer. As it says on the signboard out front: WE ARE ONE FAMILY.

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