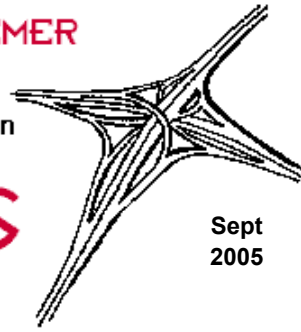




CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

A Christian Liberation Community
in the Episcopal Tradition

CROSSROADS



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36 South Street, Morristown, NJ 07960

(973) 539-0703

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From the Rector: My Turn

by the Rev. Phillip Wilson

If we had our choice as when to celebrate the beginning of the New Year, I would suggest the beginning of September rather than in the middle of winter. With September summer has ended, school begins and at Redeemer people return to church with programs starting up.

This new year of life in the parish family is filled with more than the usual number of changes. Change always comes with a mixture of feeling. The loss of the passing and the excitement of the beginning live side by side. To be alive is to feel it all.

Last year Alice Vuocolo resigned her position as organist and music director. The gap she left was huge. We were blessed to have John and Bill pick up the pieces until we found a new organist and were doubly blessed to have Wayne Burcham-Gulotta accept the position this past August.

Mary Jane, who built and developed the Church School so professionally, resigned in June to direct the Church School at St. Peter's. Youth Education Director is always a difficult job to fill, but the "gods smiled" on us in the person of Robin Dexter-Meyer who joins us to take over youth education leadership. Robin has been active in youth education ministry for many years and is presently working on a Masters degree in Christian Education from the Episcopal Virginia Seminary.

Finally, Larry announced this summer that he will resign as Pastoral Assistant at the end of October. He wants the freedom to spend extended periods of time with his mother and is listening for where God is calling him on the next stages of his journey. As much as we rejoice in Larry's being clear about what he wants to do with his life, we will all feel the emptiness of his absence. The cost of loving someone is to feel the pain of their loss.

We will celebrate L. Edwin, aka, Larry, in the fall. For the time being, we just want to enjoy him as much as possible.

Bill, the sexton, will be moving to Charlotte in the fall. Most of you do not know Bill, but what you do know is how well the buildings have been cared for these past years. We are in the process of searching for a replacement.

Also, Jon Schnaars, will join us as a deacon-in-training. Jon, a member of St. Paul's in Paterson, is in the process of meeting the requirements to be ordained as a permanent deacon in the Episcopal Church. Part of the training is to do an internship in a parish. The focus of a deacon is the ministries of a parish to respond to the needs of people outside of our doors. Jon brings a passion for outreach ministries and will work with the Redeemer leaders in these areas.

If all of this were not enough changes in our lives, everyone in the parish was invited to join in small group this summer to

dream about Redeemer's future and the directions it needs to take in the years to come. The reports from these groups have been exciting. Stay tuned to hear more of the results.

With all these changes we are still deeply committed to the vision that not only supports who we are but also calls us into who we can become. It is a vision that knows that the healing and liberating work of God is just as present today as it was in the past. It is a vision that sees all people as daughters and sons of God, that welcomes everyone to God's table, no matter what, and endeavors to live out the truth that that which connects us is stronger than that which works to divide us. It is a vision that grows from our Jewish and Christian heritage and is the Good News for the deep divisions that exist within our soul, our families, this nation and the world.

What we are doing here is important. It is life giving and it is life saving. We work to make our vision a reality. In the midst of all of the changes at this time our commitment to speaking and living this vision will NOT change.

Welcome to the new year at Redeemer. As a family we will weep together, rejoice together, celebrate together and claim the God who makes us part of each other.

From the Pastoral Assistant

by L. Edwin Hamil

When I attended Drew Theological School in the 1960's, that institution was blessed with some of the best theological and Biblical scholars of the day. I learned a tremendous amount from these professors and remain thankful for their knowledge, expertise, and gracious classroom manner. The church, indeed, benefited from a generation of excellent ministers who were trained by these scholars.

But, when I think back to my time at Drew, it was not these renowned scholars who had the greatest affect on me. Rather, it was on of the lesser-known members of the faculty who had the greatest influence on me and many others, concerning what constituted "ministry" in the truest sense of the word. We simply called him Papa Haas.

Papa Haas lived the Gospel. When new students arrived in the theological school, he was often the first one to greet them, invite them to dinner, give them advice about living in the metropolitan area, take them on their first trip into New York City, and, in some cases, actually help set up their apartments. It is my guess that he even helped some financially while they were looking for jobs.

It was not uncommon for the telephone to ring in the dorm (Yes, there was only one telephone per floor!) and to have the person who answered it yell, "It's Papa Haas. Who wants to go over to his apartment for dinner?" And at those simple dinners, students received, not only hearty food, but also hearty advice and counsel.

Students in married housing who were experiencing problems with their marriages and didn't want to reveal these problems, thinking it would reflect poorly on them as theological students, knew that the surest place for comfort, wise advice, and absolute secrecy was in Papa Haas's office.

Those who were experiencing a crisis in faith knew there was a non-judgmental person in whom they could confide and who, with great gentleness, would help them work through the problem.

Sometimes, individuals or families short on cash found anonymous gifts for which no thanks or repayment was ever expected.

Papa Haas always seemed to know who was in any kind of trouble and exactly how to approach them and help them in their time of need. He was indeed the rock that stabilized whole classes of twenty-year-olds, who thought they knew everything but, in reality, had everything to learn.

I will never forget the day in our hymnology class when, with tears in his eyes, he related how, during the singing of "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," he, as a young man, came to the realization of God's wondrous love and decided to become a minister.

So , even though I respected and honored the wonderful theological and Biblical scholars who taught me so much intellectually, it was Papa Haas who taught me what it meant to be Christlike in one's daily life and how to minister to all those who cross one's path.

When Papa Haas reached heaven, I am sure he told Jesus that he was not worthy to be there. And I am just as sure that Jesus answered, "You are more than worthy because 'as you did it to one of the least of these, my brethren, you did it to me'.

From the Youth Education Director

by Robin Dexter-Meyer

In early August, I kissed my husband Andy good-bye at the airport in Newark and flew out to Seattle to visit my mother and sister. We spent several days visiting friends, eating way too much good food, and walking Mom and Heather's dog, a pampered Shar-Pei.

Roxy got the "board and spoil" treatment at the kennel while Mom, Heather and I took a weekend trip up to Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. We caught the ferry from Anacortes, Washington, up to Sydney on Vancouver Island. The weather was perfect and the scenery was beautiful. There were lots of sailboats out, and we even saw a few seals. We had a fun weekend in Victoria, walking around the Inner Harbour with all the other tourists, taking a guided tour of the Legislative Building, having tea at Butchart Gardens, and meeting friends for brunch.

On Sunday morning, Mom and I went to the 9:15 service at Christ Church Cathedral, just a couple of blocks away from our hotel. It's a beautiful stone church with lovely stained glass windows. You know you're in the Anglican Church of Canada when you're praying for the Queen. They made a point of welcoming visitors to the service; I saw at least one other group of tourists with cameras there. In the "Children's Time," we heard about the Cathedral's Vacation Bible School, and we were shown two colorful drawings the children did of Orcas. One clearly resembled a killer whale while the other was described by the Assistant Curate as being more like a version by Picasso!

The Gospel for the day was about Jesus calming the storm and walking on the Sea of Galilee; in the sermon, the Assistant Curate talked about his experiences in lay ministry with sailors on ships in Vancouver. I reflected on our recent ferry trip. Later in the day, when we were returning home on the "Elwha," I admired a painting of earth, sea and sky, inspired by Native American art forms. Somehow, everything seemed connected.

Back in Seattle on Wednesday, Mom and I went to the noon service at St. Mark's Cathedral. Normally she doesn't do that sort of thing, but she's a good sport about my passion for church. St. Mark's is a very interesting place; the building was begun in the 1920's but they ran out of money in the Great Depression. Mom remembers fund-raising efforts back when she was a girl. The Cathedral is very tall but still unfinished, giving it an oddly modern look; a brochure says that some people affectionately call it the "Holy Box"! An effort is now getting underway to complete the building.

We wandered around inside until we found the Eucharist being celebrated in the smaller Thomsen Chapel, tucked into a front corner of the big building. The Chapel is finished and feels nice and cozy. After the service, a lady pointed out their new, pretty pipe organ. The celebrant welcomed us and invited us to come back. We wandered in the Cathedral some more, admired the huge pipe organ there, and went to the gift shop.

What did you do on your summer vacation? Do you have postcards, photos, or guides from services you attended at churches away from home? Please bring them to church this September, because Youth Education will be setting up an interactive bulletin board display in the Parish Hall. It's a fun way for me, as your new Youth Education Director, to get to know everyone, as well as being another way for all of us to share our stories and our spiritual journeys with each other.

On Being a New Member at Redeemer

by a Member of the Congregation

Almost everyone at Redeemer has taken the time to say hello to us. We are often asked, "How did you hear about Redeemer?" or "What brought you to Redeemer?"

The answer would be the most fun if I could say that when we moved here from the mid west three years ago, we looked up cool congregations in the yellow pages and the only one listed was Church of the Redeemer. Redeemer wasn't easy for me and my family to find even though I had been walking by this church since our first day in Morristown. If I had placed a notice in the personals describing what I was looking for in a church, the advertisement would have read something like this:

Wanted: Church affiliation for newly relocated couple with two lively boys ages 6 and 4. Must address the spiritual concerns of one non-practicing yet professed cultural Catholic and one former Presbyterian-turned -Congregationalist. Sermons must be relevant to current issues, personally meaningful and delivered in a non- judgmental and interesting manner. Dogma and guilt free children's religious education program required. Congregants may not shush or glare at lively children. Beautiful architecture and lovely choir a plus.

The quest to find a church that fit the needs of a family of different religious backgrounds was so difficult, that truly I had lost hope in finding one. I had to attend a variety of religious services because nothing worked out - until I found Redeemer. I conducted the search sporadically. My husband dutifully attended each new church. We dragged the kids along with us to visit

the basements and annexes of different denominations.

I started with the Catholic churches first because I had agreed to give the Catholic's a fair try. My husband hoped to raise his children in the same traditions that he shared with his father, and I wanted to support him. I met with a local priest a couple of times hoping to clear up some of my issues with conversion and deal with the enormity of it all. The first church came highly recommended by a well meaning neighbor. She told us: "Just EVERY body in the neighborhood goes there." We aren't the "just every body" types so suffice it to say that the first church was a bad fit for us. We tried another Catholic church located outside the neighborhood but it didn't feel like it could be home for either of us. Both Churches were extremely conservative compared to our experiences with the West Coast and Mid West Catholic sects and we felt uncomfortable. The Protestant in me was secretly relieved that the Catholic direction didn't work out.

When we had lived in the Bay area, I had convinced Marc that the Episcopalians were actually Catholic's but renamed themselves because in short, Henry VIII wanted a divorce and to assume power from the Pope. Therefore he was open to re-exploring this alternative to Catholicism. After attending three services at St. Peter's, the architecture, music and sermons raised our hopes for a good fit. However, the children weren't buying into the new regime and it would be fair to say that it looked like the congregants of St. Peter's felt the same way about them. We were told it was O.K and even encouraged to bring our children into the sanctuary but we were glared at all the same. It was a relief just to get through the last service.

Next stop the Presbyterians. The Presbyterian church is as culturally foreign to Marc as the Catholic Church is to me. Speaking as a former Presbyterian I told him that we referred to ourselves as the "Frozen Chosen" for a reason. Not only was the service dull as dirt, the congregation was at least to our eyes completely homogenous, old guard /status quo. George Washington probably went there and it hasn't changed a bit. I'm not being mean; they are my own people after all. When the minister asked what I thought of the church, I was brutally honest. She suggested that perhaps we were searching for something more dynamic and that I should try out the Baptists. Neither Marc nor I felt that call, so we didn't feel obliged to take her advice.

I gave two Methodist churches a try. At this point I was driving out of my desired geographic radius and juggling early morning routines to do so. The time of service and distance from home created additional variables that factored in as to whether or not the Church was a viable choice. In other words the entire works had to be worth the trouble for me to expend the energy to get up extra early and drive outside the community with two lively children and a sleepy husband in tow. They were nice enough, but the Methodists landed in the not- happening-for-us pile. The services weren't bad but not compelling enough to get us there with much enthusiasm. Evangelism tends to give my husband and me heebie jeebies so it wouldn't have lasted.

Originally, I thought that the Unitarians would work out for us. They fit all of my criteria on paper and covered some pretty interesting and relevant ideas. To their credit, they have a good humanist children's program, but my children would have nothing to do with the whole thing. This particular congregation definitely wants children worshipping in the other wing of the building so I couldn't try sneaking them in with me. Well, I did bring them in with me once and I was promptly asked to leave about 10 minutes into the service. That didn't bother me terribly much because I was also hoping for more of a religious production or something mystical. I wanted to leave the service feeling that I'd at least had some sort of contact with You-Know-Who. In truth, I have previously described their church as something like a program aired on National Public Radio Show; interesting, dynamic, liberal, and non- denominational. It didn't inspire me nor raise much passion.

At this point, although I sorely missed having a church home and any kind of Church experiences for my family I had mostly given up on the idea that we would ever find a place where we felt comfortable. It is really kind of funny how we ultimately found Redeemer.

Last June, my son, Pablo who was turning six asked me to go to church for his birthday. He said that he wanted to ask God not to let any more people die and to tell him that he was angry at him for letting people die in the first place. There was just one church left to try that was close enough to try. We had walked by it before and had not considered it for one reason only, because, on the marquis it said : INCLUSIVE Language. (Now you all are going to know what an idiot I can be.) Since I had not ever, not once heard anything about the Redeemer I made an assumption: I thought the services were conducted in Spanish.

Having nothing to lose and not caring that the services were in Spanish can you imagine my surprise and delight when I entered the sanctuary? We received warm smiles, non- cloying yet interested greetings, there were cool people, families, gay, straight, young, old, of all colors. To say the Congregation was diverse is an understatement. There wouldn't be a survey that could cover everyone. We had a great sermon with a choir that sang like angels, we ate doughnuts, sang hymns, we prayed the Lord's Prayer and held hands like we meant it. It was religious and it was cool. The sermon was relevant, non judgmental, uplifting and carried to the vaulted ceilings and stained glass windows from an actual pulpit. It felt significant. Oh, and the fragrance, beauty and tranquility of the sanctuary. I could go on and on about what I came home and told my husband about Redeemer.

Obviously, we came back together many times. And to add icing on my cake, our lively children enjoy the children's program as well. They actually participate and look forward to going. You should hear the questions and comments that they are asking me now.

The lengthy search to find Redeemer helped me to know what was important to me in a religion. No one glared or shushed the lively boys, no one sized us up and no one asked if we were saved. We were made to feel at home, we were hugged gently

and made to feel a part of this community. We are not obligated yet we are encouraged. Congregants have taken the time to know us and I treasure the opportunity to pray and take communion together.

Above all, this church is part of something much much bigger than me. Redeemer walks their talk in the community. My family and I are involved with the community through Redeemer. None of us can do every thing the church presents but we do what we can and support the others who do something else. We get to take part in an intellectual, philosophical and spiritual dialogue regarding ourselves and our community as well as experience the far corners of Cameroon and Ghana. I believe in the mission statement of the church and now that I know what inclusive really means, I can attest to it as well.

This church means a lot to me as a family person but I like what is happening to my heart. I feel it expanding. My awareness is expanding. Everyone has probably heard the axiom that when the student is ready the teacher will appear. I believe that this is exactly what happened to me.

Thank you to everyone at Redeemer for making such a huge difference in our lives and for the opportunity to continue to grow, learn and participate in our journey together.

Small Group Opportunities at Redeemer to Enrich and Strengthen:

Spiritually, Educationally, Personally and Inter-personally

In the fall the Parish Small Groups start up and actively seek people to become involved. Not only are such groups strengthen and enrich our lives but they also provide a good way to get to know people in the parish. These groups are about listening deeply to ourselves and each other, about sharing our stories and learning some of the wealth of our Judeo-Christian heritage.

Call the office for more information at 973-539-0703 or make you interest known on the Groups Information flyer in the Sunday service guide. What follows is a brief description of each group and their meeting times:

ADULT FORUM: Meets weekly from 9:00-10:15 AM on Sunday mornings in the Parlor of the Parish Hall. The Adult Forum begins on September 25, 2005. This group takes on a variety of topics from unpacking some of the richness of the Judeo-Christian tradition to looking at contemporary issues. People wrestle with their experience of faith and God. This group is ongoing and invites people to attend at any time.

MEN'S GROUP: Meets twice a month on the 1st & 3rd Mondays of the month at 7:30 PM in the Parlor of the Parish Hall. The first session is Mon. Oct. 3, 2005. This group is a cross section of the parish: straight and gay, partnered and single. It is a sharing group with topics chosen by the men themselves. The life of the group is 8 sessions and invites new people.

PARTNERS' GROUP: Meets in the parlor of the Parish House on the 4th Monday of each month at 7:30 PM beginning September 26, 2005. All people in committed relationships are invited to attend to share their stories and to learn from each other. The group also chooses topics. People are invited to attend at any time..

RACIAL DIALOGUE GROUP: Meets monthly in the Parish Hall. The focus of this group is naming and dismantling of racism within ourselves, within the group, the parish and the community. New members are invited.

WOMEN'S GROUP: This is a group in which woman come together to share stories and to listen and learn from each other. The group meets in the Parlor of the Parish House on 4th Wednesday of the month beginning on September 28, 2005 from 7:30 to 9:00 PM.

HEALING PRAYER GROUP: This group meets on the 3rd Thursdays from 7:30 to 9:00 PM in the Parlor, beginning on September 15, 2005. Come in a spirit of expectancy, rather than expectation as we continue the journey to freedom and wholeness.

Youth Education News: Summer Youth Education

by Robin Dexter-Meyer, Director of Youth Education

A summer program for children was offered during the 9:30 Sunday services from July 10 to August 28. The Nursery remained open throughout the summer, with Valentina and her mother Luzmary welcoming babies and toddlers; Valentina's father also helped.

Robin organized the program for children in the Parlor with the idea of continuing what was done last summer but offering an informal experience, different from Sunday School. Many thanks to the children who attended and the adult volunteers who helped!

Dotty brought animal puppets for the children to play with; Terri led a walk to the center of the Labyrinth downstairs; Maureen helped Robin lead Zen meditation in the upstairs meeting room; Dan gave a lesson in origami (Japanese paper folding) with RoseMarie's assistance; Carol explained the Interfaith Hospitality Network and showed the kids the guest rooms downstairs; and Tricia read a story about Dragonstorms, on the theme of peace. Thanks also to the Ushers who alerted the group when it was time to go to church for Communion.

Overall, it is hoped that the children who participated have a wider perspective now on the things people do at Redeemer and the ways they encounter God. However, since attendance varied so much, a different approach to summer ministry with children may be considered for next year.

Redeemer Book Review

by Justin, Associate Crossroads Editor

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

By Mark Haddon

September Book - Redeemer Book Group

For September, the Redeemer Book Group has decided to read *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night - Time* by Mark Haddon. The book is about an autistic boy trying to solve a mystery.

Early in the book, Christopher finds the neighbor's dog dead in the middle of the night. He wants to find out who had killed it, but is stopped by his father on every attempt. Two years prior to the story, his mother had "died" of a heart attack - or did she?

Even though the book is supposed to be a book Christopher wrote about the mystery of the dog and everything else the adventure brings, what really makes the book interesting is how his autistic mind works. Anyone who isn't autistic or hasn't worked with autism will think that the book is amazing and quite weird. That is the main point the author is trying to bring across.

You could interpret the book as wonderful, I might think it's very disturbing to my mind, but even though it can be controversial, everybody can agree that Haddon did a great job of how it is to look through the eyes of autism.

Mark Haddon is a writer and illustrator of numerous award - winning children's books and television screenplays. As a young man, Haddon worked with autistic individuals. He [currently] teaches creative writing for the Arvon Foundation and lives in Oxford, England. (Vintage Books)

-Justin

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