



CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

A Christian Liberation Community
in the Episcopal Tradition

CROSSROADS



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From the Pastoral Assistant: My Turn

by L. Edwin Hamil

The time has come for me to say goodbye to this parish that I love with all my heart. And, because this is so profoundly difficult for me, I am going to be brief.

I have loved you deeply.
I have prayed for you daily.
I hope I have served you well.

May God's peace be always with you.
Larry

Appreciating Larry Edwin Hamil

We have been blessed to have Larry Edwin Hamil as a Pastoral Assistant at Redeemer since March of 2001. During that time he has become an integral part of the leadership of Redeemer. He has brought pastoral sensitivity, administrative ability, and an infectious sense of humor to our parish family.

Some of Larry's responsibilities have been to act as "administrative watch dog" overseeing worship booklets, ministry schedules, new member's events, ministry pledges and more. He has participated in worship, leading, preaching and planning. He has been the driving force behind the Altar Guild. Pastorally, Larry visits shut-ins and the sick. He meets with new members or anyone who wishes to talk. Larry has taken full responsibility for the parish when the rector is away. This is only a partial list of what Larry's presence has done to enrich our community.

Larry has always had my full confidence, and I gladly share this ministry with him. He has been a confidant, a counselor and a truth-teller to me. He has been a colleague, someone from whom there are no secrets. I have been blessed to work with him. Because of him, my ministry is better.

Larry has a permanent place in all of our hearts created by his sensitive listening, his gentle leadership and his outrageous sense of humor. He will be deeply missed.

We will celebrate Larry at a special reception in the Parish House following the 10:30 a.m. service. The Soup Kitchen will serve upstairs, and we will have use of the entire auditorium. During this celebration there will be a chance to share what Larry has meant to us.

A Tale of Courage

What is it that can drive a person barely out of their teens to risk their and their family's lives to save others? How could someone so young find within themselves the strength to defy a regime that had brutally annexed most of Europe within a very short period of time?

That is the crux of the story of our program on Holocaust Sunday, October 23 at the 10:30am service. In 1940 as the Nazi war machine darkened the landscape of Europe, Jaap Penraat was a 20-year-old architecture student in Amsterdam. By all accounts he was an ordinary young man, working, as other young men his age were doing, towards moving into adulthood and finding his place in life. Yet unlike so many others, when he saw the hatred the Germans had for his Jewish neighbors he became angry and decided to do something about it. He was especially driven to action when three months after the occupation the German administrators fired all Jewish employees in state agencies, such as schools and the post office, after having systematically identified all Jewish employees. Some of those fired were personal friends of Mr. Penraat.

Mr. Penraats' father was a printer, and it dawned on him that he could print fake id documents for Jewish citizens, which would allow them to slip through the slowly tightening noose of the German occupiers. He put this plan into place with the help of others, and was able to stop, at least temporarily; the first phases of the German's ghastly plan for the Jews of Amsterdam.

In mid-1942, after Mr. Penraat had been caught producing false documents and imprisoned for several months, he realized that this initial plan would not work. Jewish citizen were now forced to wear the yellow Star of David on their clothing at all times, invalidating the false id documents he had been producing for about a year or so.

By autumn of 1942, after 400 Jews had been arrested and sent to the camps to ultimately perish there, Mr. Penraat came up with another idea. He knew that the Germans were desperate to gather up laborers for work on fortifications in France, which they were feverishly building against the expected eventual invasion of the allied forces. They had thus issued a series of guest worker documents that allowed workers from occupied countries to travel to France. He also had heard that the French underground were helping people escape France through the Pyrenees mountains into Spain, where they could travel to Gibraltar and on to England eventually. His plan was simple in concept, he planned on creating fake work authorization forms that would allow him to take Jews to France as "guest workers" and hand them off to the underground once there. In reality, it was difficult to execute and at any time he and the people he was leading could have been discovered, with their fate being almost certain execution. However, despite all the risks and the near misses, between 1942 and 1944 Mr. Penraat was able to help over 400 Jews escape to safety by leading them to France.

After the war, Mr. Penraat completed his studies and became an architect, and in 1958 he moved to the U.S. with his family. And though he had committed one of the great acts of bravery of that dark period, like many such people he never spoke of it to others, and even his family wasn't aware of what he had done. It was only in fairly recent times that it has come to light. The Dutch government granted him a war pension for his role in saving the people he did, and later in 1998 he was given the Medal of the Righteous by Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Heroes and Martyrs Remembrance Authority. He also has been recognized with the publication of a book for children about his life, Forging Freedom by Hudson Talbott. The author will be a featured part of the presentation at Redeemer along with Mr. Penraat, to help share in and explain this incredible story.

That still raises a big question, why? Why was he willing to risk his life for people that in many cases he didn't know? I think that is the biggest lesson that he brings to Redeemer. I believe the reason reinforces a lesson that we so often hear at Redeemer. Though he was not Jewish, Mr. Penraat had grown up around Jewish people and was familiar with them as people simply leading their lives as friends and neighbors, and he had even been a "Shabbas Goy," a gentile (usually a child) who would turn on the lights for his Jewish neighbors since they were forbidden to do so on the start of the Sabbath. In other words, he saw them as fellow human beings rather than being the "others" that the propaganda of the Germans and centuries of anti-Semitic bigotry had labeled Jews as. In turn this allowed him to react in a way that being wholly human demands of us, to reach out and help fellow human beings in trouble.

Why Do We Use Spanish in Church from Time to Time?

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1. To recognize that there are people in our midst for whom English is not their first language.
2. To welcome and honor the growing number of Spanish speaking people in our community.
3. To remind English-only speakers of what it is like to be the "other."
4. A symbolic way to say that all are welcome at our table.

Clearly we use very little Spanish in our services. We do not have a Spanish Eucharist. But, the little we use is to remind us that "inclusivity" is always a journey to deeper and deeper levels. It is a journey and never a "done deal."

For Adults Only

We are beginning an exciting new year of Adult Forum sessions starting Sunday, September 25, at 9:00 AM in the Parish House.

Our theme concerns examining ourselves, our society, and our roots, our pasts, our presents and futures. How did our thoughts, our cultures and our values originate? Where do we stand now? What will be the nature of our evolution?

We'll look at what we have learned as we have grown as a people and as individuals. (And what we haven't.) We'll look at change, in a personal as well as global sense.

Our perspectives will be broadened by visiting speakers, by ethics discussions, and by oral histories related by parishioners with fascinating pasts.

Discussion topics are:

- Oct. 2nd: Creation Stories in the Bible
- Oct. 16th: What is the Big Story in the Hebrew Bible?
- Oct. 23rd: Others Killed in the Holocaust: Who Are They?
- Oct. 30th: Exploring Islam

Please join us to share, to listen, and to change.

Hi! I'm Jon and I'm New Here

by the Deacon-in-Training

Hi! My name is Jon and I'm new here. I've only been to two of your Sunday morning services but already I can tell you that I am excited about working for your church as a nine-month Deacon-in-Training intern. The staff and congregation have made me, my partner George, and his mom Mary very welcome, and we are all three of us deeply impressed by the very palpable spiritual experience Redeemer engenders during your 10:30 services.

In many ways being at Redeemer feels like coming home. When Phillip gives a sermon I feel he is talking directly to me. Listening to Wayne on the organ I'm transported to my peaceful Sunday morning living room and the classical music coming from my stereo. Sharing the "Peace" at Redeemer is just like having one of our annual friends and family get-togethers, it's all hugs and smiles and "glad to see you" conversations. Redeemer talks about the things that I care about; things like inclusivity, justice, outreach and service, and also seems to find effective ways to turn that talk into action. I love working with a congregation that cares passionately about feeding the poor, creating a home for Persons Living with AIDS, raising money for the victims of disasters, and all of the other ministries that I see you all work hard to make happen.

I suppose I should give you all a heads up and alert you that one of my most important jobs at Redeemer will be to help in starting new ministries and to expand existing ministries to better serve the peoples most in need in our surrounding communities. Since I will be moving on at the end of my nine month internship what I do while I am here will be focused especially on building up the kinds up team efforts that will keep moving forward long after I am gone.

If I am to be ordained next year as a Deacon, it will mean that I have learned from you how to help in developing the kinds of ministries that Redeemer does so well, ministries that all Christians are called upon to create in order to serve those most in need, not just in our congregations but in the surrounding world as well. You will probably see me most at the 10:30 service

because I will also need to learn how to help in preparing and serving during the worship service. Finally, you may also run across me at some of the many committee, vestry, staff, and volunteer meetings that always seem to be going on in your very busy church, as I will need to get to know you all as quickly as possible if I am to be effective in the short nine months that I will be here.

Another role of the Deacon-in-Training, and one that I take very seriously, is to be a visible symbol of the importance the Episcopal Church in America places upon lay ministry and lay leadership in the church. We are a church that believes in the "ministry of all believers." Deacons are laypersons who live out in the world and who bring back to the church the needs, concerns, and issues of the outside world. We live, work, and play in the "outside" world and when we act in our church communities we reflect that "outside" world perspective. Since many of us are still of working age we normally spend 40+ hours a week pursuing the goals, agendas, and cultures of that material world. If I accomplish nothing else in the nine months that I am here, I hope that I will at least have inspired one person to give serious consideration to the Deaconate. I have always been a very active member in my church, but since I have begun pursuing the Deaconate I have become a much more effective congregant. I believe deeply in the importance of this ministry and I hope that I will find a way to communicate that feeling to you all.

Well there is so much more that I feel I should be sharing with you, but this article has to get to the press, so I simply want to add that I'm looking forward to getting to know you all as quickly as possible. I promise to try to start a conversation the next time we bump into each other; it may take me one or two introductions to remember your name so don't be shy, I'm used to people forgetting and mangling my name too.

New Member Regional Meetings

So You Liked Having Regional Meetings....?

How does a New Member Regional Support Ministry Sound?

As you know, over the summer, Redeemer members met at 20 separate regional meetings at members' homes, and participated in dialogues about our vision and long-range plans. Many comments were recorded, and are being sorted, analyzed and sifted through to understand the priorities of the congregation, and to decide where we need to take action.

As we are working through the output, we've also collected lots of informal feedback that the idea of having regional meetings was a good one for our community. We've heard some suggestions that we should find more ways to use this kind of process. Several members have also suggested we maintain a steady diet of regional community get-togethers, and find ways to incorporate new members into this process.

We are therefore calling for members who are interested in shaping a new ministry based on this idea, a New Member Regional Support ministry. This ministry would replace the existing New Member Contact ministry. Whenever a new member joins Redeemer, their contact information would be sent to ministry members in their "region," who would then make contact with the new member, meet at coffee hour, and get together outside of Church. Members from the regional team would include the new member in regional activities, as well as serve as a Redeemer "alert" for special services and other events. Of course, this is at the experimental stage right now, so we are looking for members with a spirit of adventure as well as the gift of hospitality. Our thinking is we would try this out for our next welcoming (on November 6), gather learnings from the experience, and roll the ministry out with formal guidelines next year.

Youth Education News

by Robin Dexter-Meyer

Sunday School Resumes

On Sunday, September 18, students and teachers received a blessing in church. We began a new year of learning and teaching when Sunday School resumed the following week, on September 25.

Because of a problem with condensation in the downstairs classrooms, we have temporarily relocated to the upstairs meeting room. We expect the problem to be fixed soon, and we appreciate the attention being paid to this matter.

The "open classroom" environment is an important element in Godly Play. We prepare ourselves to worship God by quieting our spirits, walking more slowly, and talking more softly. This is somewhat difficult in a shared space. Also, a key element in the response to storytelling is the options children can choose from in terms of activities or art media; we are necessarily limited in what we can move upstairs.

On the other hand, we are thankful that there is a nice, dry, light-filled place available for us to use, and we hope that our classes do not inconvenience other groups who use this room after church.

October Calendar

This is a busy month for everyone at Redeemer, including all of us in Youth Education!

Our Youth Education Committee meets on Sunday, October 2. Among the upcoming events we will be planning are Family Night on Friday, October 21, and the Sunday School Open House on October 23.

I will be available after church on Sunday, October 16, from about 12:00 to 1:00, to chat informally with parents and anyone else who is interested. If you are curious about anything in the Youth Education Handbook, Godly Play, or religious education in general, please come.

Dan, Deb and I will go to Newark on Saturday, October 15, for the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Child Abuse Awareness training offered by the Diocese of Newark. This training is required for paid staff, and recommended for any adult working in ministry with children and youth.

Ecumenical Training Associates is having a workshop at Christ Church in Summit on the morning of Saturday, October 22. I attend this event annually, and I recommend it to anyone involved in Christian education with young people. It is always fun and inspiring. Please see me for a brochure, if you are interested.

Baptism

The children began the Sunday School year in church, celebrating the Baptism of three of their fellow students. The central symbol of Baptism is water: "We thank you, Almighty God, for the gift of water." (The Book of Common Prayer, page 306.) If you would like to talk about Baptism with your child, a fun way to do this with young children is to play with water. Since wondering is an integral part of the response to the story in Godly Play, wonder about water with your child. You might ask, "I wonder what people do with water? I wonder why we use water in Baptism? I wonder what the water really means?"

With older children, you could go visit a nearby pond or river, and wonder what it might have been like to be baptized by John in the Jordan River, or to be baptized outdoors on the spur of the moment, like the Ethiopian official whose story is in the Book of Acts. You may have heard that some students in the Intermediate class went canoeing and tubing on the Delaware River in September with their teacher, Deb Wild, our rector Phillip (who towed them most of the way!) and me. Such trips can provide "teachable moments" when you and your child can talk about spiritual things.

A Personal Note

In my article last month, I mentioned my Mom and sister's beloved dog, Roxy. I am sad to say that Roxy died in September. She was a good dog who liked walks. I imagine her walking with angels now, and I will be thinking of her on the feast of St. Francis, when we have the Blessing of the Animals.

From the Music Director

by Wayne Burcham-Gulotta

Musical items of note coming in October will include:

- The Jazz Benefit Concert for New Orleans relief on October 9 at 7:00pm;
- Music Appreciation Sunday on October 16, which will recognize and honor all things musical at Redeemer, especially our choir and instrumentalists;
- The last Sunday of our beloved Pastoral Assistant Larry on October 30 with much special music.

I've heard nothing but glowing terms to describe the choirs' sound in the new location in the sanctuary. The architectural features of a semi-circular "east" wall behind the choir, as well as the semi-dome feature of the sanctuary ceiling work, together as an acoustical sound shell projecting the music. This was undoubtedly planned by the original architect to project the voice of the priest who, at that time, would have been facing the high altar, with his back to the congregation. We're still reaping the benefits even though how we use our beautiful edifice has changed.

The Redeemer Choir will be having its annual retreat on Sunday, October 2 following the Eucharist. We'll start with lunch and have an afternoon of exploring music to come in the new season, socializing, and fun.

New choir members are always encouraged and welcomed. We rehearse every Sunday morning from 9:15 to 10:15 and sing at the 10:30am Eucharist, as well as special services during the year. As you select a Ministry Pledge in the coming months, don't forget to consider the choir - your gift that keeps on giving.

Redeemer Book Review

by the Editor of Crossroads

Number the Stars

Written By Lois

Number The Stars, is one of those books that I found quite hard to put down. What is truly amazing is that the book technically is a young adult book but the book's content and style belies that simple label. It is extremely well written and I think it is one of those books that older children and their parents can enjoy reading and talking about together, as well as being truly enjoyable and eye-opening for adults.

The book is set in the turbulent world of Denmark, circa 1943. Having been through several years of German occupation things have gone from bad to worse. Soldiers are on street corners challenging any who go out, food is rationed or otherwise limited, and for the Jewish population the future is becoming grimmer, as slowly the Germans begin to hem in their lives and take away freedoms.

The tale itself is told through the eyes of Annemarie, a 10 year old girl, who lives in a Copenhagen apartment building with her mother and father and her younger sister. She is best friends with Ellen Rosen, a Jewish girl, and the story proceeds centered around the lives of these people that in turn serves to help tell the story of one of the small miracles of history. In 1943, inspired at least in part by their king and his defiance of the occupying Germans, the people of Denmark smuggled out to Sweden nearly the entire Jewish population of Denmark, some 7500 people, in the face of planned deportation of Jews to the concentration camps. It is a story of friendship, of those lost in the struggle to resist the horrible plans of the occupiers (many of them barely grown young adults,) and of how a group of people can come to stand up for people unlike themselves in the name of being human.

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