



CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

A Christian Liberation Community
in the Episcopal Tradition

CROSSROADS



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My Turn

By Colleen

During one of this year's Lenten Wednesday evening sessions, we were asked to name what we were passionate about; I answered Redeemer. Why am I so passionate? The answer lies in a fifteen or so year love affair with Phillip and an overwhelming sense that every time I walk through the doors, I have entered a place that God created the world to be. One where all are welcome, where all are celebrated, where no one wears any labels save that we are all family. Lest anyone get the wrong idea, my love affair with Phillip is one of tremendous respect and awe and wonder and amazement. In Phillip, I have encountered a man of uncommon courage and commitment who leads this family to a vision of what is possible.

Like the Pied Piper, he has lead this rag tag army of believers to new heights and, in the process, has stretched us all to become more than we ever believed was possible. Unlike the Pied Piper, he has invited us into shared ministry and now finds himself sometimes being the one to say, "Slow down!" He has empowered and enabled leaders within the family to rise; sometimes with a push, sometimes with a gentle nudge but always with unerring support.

It has been my privilege to be one of those leaders. I have worked closely with an amazing group of people and have been blessed to know so many of you well. As I end my days as your Warden, I would encourage you all to look at how it is that you are a member of the family and how you might want to be a member. What are your gifts, your strengths, your blessings, your hopes and your dreams? Bring them all to the table; share them and you will find they are multiplied in ways you cannot begin to imagine.

Each of you has become a part of the tapestry of my life and I give thanks for knowing you. You are and will always be in my heart and in my prayers.

Shalom,
Colleen

Shalom Ministry Awards March 18, 2007

This year, as for the past eighteen years, the Vestry, in order to hold up a particular model of ministry within our common life, presents the Shalom Ministry Award to a member or members of the parish. Focusing on a different model of ministry each year, the vestry honors the great variety of ways the people of Redeemer live out their individual commitments to be of service to others.

This year we honor two people whose commitment to the vision and life of Redeemer is only limited by the fact that there are 24 hours in a day. They have given freely of their time, their creativity, their prayers and their pocketbook to help make life abundant at this place. In fact, giving thanks for the abundance in life is one of their guiding principles.

They first came to Redeemer, recommended by a friend, in 1999 and were welcomed into the parish in 2000. Immediately they began to drink deeply from the spiritual well and at the same time started to give back.

They began to deliver altar flowers to the homebound and gifts for seniors at Christmas and Easter. They were part of the New Members luncheon committee and provided desserts for the Soup Kitchen. They were chalice bearers and intercessors. They became part of the original Healing Prayer Ministry, the Prayer Chain, money counters and the Stewardship Committee. State a need, call for help and these two respond, even though they have to drive over half of New Jersey to get here.

I cannot hold back the names any longer: Dotty W. and Dolores S. are the recipients of the 2007 Shalom Ministry Award.

Dotty and Dolores offer warm hospitality not only to the people they invite to their home, the people they invite into their lives, but also the people they reach out to. Let me tell you about a homebound member of Redeemer in her 90's, Lou Hill. Dotty and Dolores got to know and love Lou as they took her the altar flowers on a regular basis. They have become part of Lou's family. Lou's face lights up when their names are mentioned and Lou loves shows off the wonderful windup toys these two have given her. When asked about Lou, all that Dotty and Dolores can talk about is the blessing that Lou gives them.

It is in the Stewardship Committee that Dotty and Dolores have shared their immense creativity and energy: in the Appreciative Inquiry home meetings, six of which they hosted and facilitated and in the creation of the Elinor and Preston Root Partnership. They share their rich experience in non-profit work, as Akabar business women, as creators of brochures and PowerPoint graphics, as providers of gifts for seniors and handouts at the Street Fair.

They openly share their lives in the Partners' Group which they seldom ever miss. These two have a zest for life. They know that in giving they receive. They know that they are not in control of the future. They know how to let go of the small stuff. They love each other deeply and embody the mission and vision of Redeemer.

Dotty and Dolores, 2007 Shalom Ministry Recipients.

This year the Vestry gives a second Shalom Ministry Award that is long overdue. This person came to the Parish in 1996 and was welcomed in 1997. She has watched the growth of Redeemer and has been an active part of its leadership all that time. Commitment and responsibility are this person's middle names. When she says she will take on a project or show up at meeting, you can take that promise to the bank. She is known for asking the tough questions both to herself and to others. She is talented and creative, prancing around on the stage in the Men's Group Dinner cabaret, singing solemn anthems in the Redeemer choir every Sunday and singing in a demanding community choral group: the Summit Chorale.

She came to Redeemer under one name and changed it two years later. She had served on the Vestry as long as anyone can remember, three terms, nine years, has been delegate to the Diocesan Convention and has shared her gifts as an organizational development consultant with the Diocese of Newark. By, now she knows who she is and you should also: Terry, formerly, Morello, and now Perkins, 2007 recipient of the Shalom Ministry Award.

One reason this may be a surprise is because as chair of the Nominating Committee, Terry put forth the names of Dotty and Dolores, thinking they were the only Shalom recipients. But, the Vestry knew that this award was long over due for Terry, also.

Terry has shared her personal and professional gifts with the Vestry as she took on the responsibility for membership issues, particularly working with the new members and greeters. Terry, on the Vestry, was one person you could count on to read the budget figures, know what they mean and ask the relevant question. Terry has designed and led Vestry retreats and the training of ministry heads.

Terry has been an active member of the Stewardship Committee since its inception. She brings to this group not only her

organizational developments skills but also a deep spiritual commitment to stewardship as a way of life, as a way of giving thanks for what has been given to her. As part of the Stewardship Committee she was one of the leaders in the Appreciative Inquiry process and the small house meetings throughout the parish. She was the one who volunteered to gather all the data from these meetings and give it shape so we could hear what it was telling us.

For Terry, ministry is found in her profession, in her parish activities and in her personal home life, as she has opened herself to the needs of the family she inherited with marriage. Ministry also extended to her care giving for her husband Art during and after his serious heart surgery. When Terry makes a commitment, you can take it to the bank.

Terry P: 2007 Recipient of the Shalom Ministry Award.

It's Time for a New Pictorial Church Directory

With all the new people at Redeemer, we decided that it is time for a new pictorial church directory!

So, on April 26 and 27 from 3:00 pm - 9:30 pm and April 28 from 10 am - 5 pm we have arranged to have a photographer from Olan Mills (a company that specializes in church directories) come to the church to take pictures for the new directory.

Everyone who participates will receive a FREE 8x10 portrait as well as a free directory!! There will be no pressure to buy additional photos. However, if you do want to purchase some, they will be sold at a very reasonable rate.

The pictures will be taken by appointment in the church parlor. If you haven't signed up, there is still time!! Sign-ups will continue on Sunday, April 1st and Sunday April 15th.

We need volunteers to help on the dates the portraits are being taken. We are looking at the following shifts:

April 26 and 27: 1 pm - 6 pm and 6 pm - 10 pm

April 28: 9 am - 12:30 pm and 12:30 pm - 6 pm

If you have some time and can help out, or have any questions, please email or call Karen.

We are hoping everyone will participate to make this project a success. It will give all of us who are new, and those who are not so new, the chance to place a name with a familiar face!!

Resolution in Response to the Anglican Primates

The following Resolution and Sense of the Vestry was unanimously approved by the Vestry of the Church of the Redeemer in Morristown, NJ on Monday March 12, 2007 to be distributed widely in the hope that other parishes will also express their opinions openly.

This is to be sent to our Bishops, the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies.

Colleen Hintz and Gene Williams, Wardens, Church of the Redeemer

The Church of the Redeemer is a Christian Liberation Community in the Episcopal tradition located in Morristown, New Jersey, in the Diocese of Newark. We write today in response to the recent Primates' meeting in Tanzania with the burning question in our hearts and in our minds: At what cost will the Episcopal Church of the United States follow the demands of that meeting?

Redeemer begins the great Liberation Mass with the choral introit, "Tear down the walls that divide us, Unbind the chains that confine us, Remove all labels that define us, The fear that undermines us, All People, All people, All God's people are welcome in this place." We believe this to be the essence of the Gospel message. It is most troubling to reconcile this with the September 30th deadline imposed by the Primates' mandate that we must disavow Gay, Lesbian,

Bisexual and Transgendered (GLBT) members of the Communion.

The genius of Anglicanism is that it was founded on the premise that we could agree to disagree; that we are all family, that we are all welcome at the table and that we do not always have to believe the same things or say the same things to belong. Now, we are being asked to define Anglicanism as the exclusion of our GLBT brothers and sisters. We must, therefore, ask at what cost will we remain in the Anglican Communion? We cannot place some on a sacrificial altar for the supposed good of the whole or there is no whole. We must as a simple matter of justice stand together; even with those and for those among us who cannot stand on their own out of fear of retribution for whom it is God created them to be.

Being part of a whole in a great historical context is a good and powerful thing. But, if the cost of being a member means that we must deny some the right to a blessing and the right to serve in the church to the fullness of their gifts, then the cost is too high. It is a simple matter of justice.

What cost will the Episcopal Church accept? The answer is in your hearts and in your control. Jesus walked a lonely, holy Lent; may the Easter in our future bring abundant life even in the face of death.

May God be with us all

Daily Record: Faith Matters for Thur. March 22, 2007

Let me tell you the incredible story of two strong women whose Civil Union I had the honor to perform and bless as soon as it was legally possible in February of this year. They are Cindy Meneghin and Maureen Kilian, who have waited since 1981 for the day that their relationship could be legally recognized.

Their life together for these past 32 years has the look of most other traditional couples: having two children, a boy, Joshua and a girl, Sarah; caring for aging parents; going to PTA and homeroom meetings; buying a home and fixing it up; going to Church together; baking cookies and serving as a family at the Church Soup Kitchen; driving that ultimate "family-mobile" a large van; taking family vacations to the shore and both parents going to work and paying taxes. Couples don't come more traditional than these two.

Something that was not so traditional about these two was their joining with other couples to sue the state of New Jersey to allow them to get married. It was not something that they would have sought out; but they had no choice. So, for the past five years Cindy, Maureen, Joshua and Sarah met with lawyers, attended town meetings, sat on public panels, had their pictures taken, talked with reporters and gave up their private life so that their relationship could be legally recognized. Maybe there is some traditional "mother bear" in each of these two women, fighting for family and what is important.

I asked them how they have been treated these five years, fully expecting to hear of hate letters and abusive phone calls. Instead, I heard just the opposite: supportive teachers in their children's school saying how they had seen them on television, neighbors in the Path mark rushing down the aisle to give a hug in solidarity and a Butler town clerk who greeted them warmly when they went down to register for a civil union, saying, "It's been a long time coming," as she helped them fill out the forms. Cindy and Maureen earned this respect and support by who they are and how they handled themselves these five years.

Human beings are created in the image of God whose commandment is that we love one another. We were created for relationship. To forbid or minimize the committed relationship of two people is to inflict an incredible hurt upon them. It is to divide the world up into categories of good enough and not good enough. It is to deny the power of God whose glory is found in human beings fully alive. And, we have discovered that we become most alive when we love deeply and fully and when we allow ourselves to be loved in the same way.

Cindy and Maureen's love and commitment of the past 32 years graced everyone gathered to witness your vows. But something was missing. In every way their life together is that of a marriage, but they are denied the privilege of calling it marriage.

When any two people take the incredible risk of entering a life long covenant with each other; when any two people make a commitment to each other before anyone else; when any two people open themselves up to the exquisite joy, the excruciating pain, the everyday familiarity and the hard work that is found in such a committed relationship, it is the essence of marriage, regardless of the language we are allowed to use. Everyone knows the sacred quality of marriage between two people which is to be honored and respected before the relationship to any other person. Everyone know what this means. That is why the word is so important.

An example of the honor given to marriage was found in a picture that dominated the front page of the January 2, 2007 New York Times. Governor-elect Eliot Spitzer and his wife, Silda, hand in hand, were climbing the Capital steps in Albany to be greeted at the top by out going Governor George Pataki and his wife Libby, standing hand in hand. Everyone seeing that photo got the message: of the significance of committed relationships that comes before all others and are to be respected and honored. That is why we must not stop until marriage, in name and substance, is available to all. Everyone knows what marriage is. To refuse to allow the name of marriage to any couple is to say to them that their relationship is less than marriage and is diminished in value.

For me, God is not found on Michelangelo's ceiling but within that great long line of people down through time who have struggled for the simple right to be treated as a child of God. For me, God is part of that struggle, part of the movement from the first time one person said to another, "No, you can not treat me as less than human and I accept the cost of demanding that you see me as such." God is a part of that struggle. Thank you Cindy and Maureen.

Baptism, Confirmation and Reception: What Are They All About? How do I Become an Episcopalian?

Being a Christian is not a requirement to be a member of the Church of the Redeemer. Often I remind people that neither God nor Jesus are Christians.

Here we hold up the experiences of God as what we share in common more than specific words and stories of God. For most of at Redeemer we capture those experiences in the word "Liberation" as that which sets people free to be whom God created them to be. We look for liberation and name it in ways that are personal, spiritual and political.

At the very same time Redeemer is a community with powerful and poignant Christian roots that give many of us a larger framework in which to talk about our experiences of God. The "Jesus story" is also a "liberation story." Some people approach the "Jesus story" with an intellectual distance and others embrace it, personally, as their story.

Baptism is the way we embrace Christianity as our story and state publicly that the "Jesus story" is the way we name our God, who we are, our priorities in life and that for which we are willing to suffer. Baptism is not about what we believe in our head as much as it is for which our heart yearns. It is about declaring that we are part of a larger Christian family and therefore, are part of each others' growth and well being. It is about accepting our inherent worth as daughters and sons of God and then working for the justice that treats everyone else in the same way.

Baptism is about claiming a Christian identify and membership in a family where people are supporting each other to live into the fullness of that identity.

Baptism is usually done with infants and small children with their parent/s making commitments and talking vows in the child's name. Baptism takes on an even more powerful focus when it is done with an adult. Here we see adults making profound statements about who they are and what they most value in life.

Confirmation is the ceremony, presided over by the bishop, in which young people and adults publicly "confirm" the baptismal vows, often taken in their name by their parent/s. For young people it is a rite of passage telling everyone that they are old enough to begin to make their own commitments. Confirmation of baptismal vows is something that we live into at ever deeper levels are we grow.

People, who have already confirmed their baptismal vows in another faith tradition, are not "re-confirmed" as if the original ceremony was not good enough. Instead, they are "received," with their confirmed vows honored, into the Episcopal section of the God's huge pasture.

Confirmation will be held on Sunday afternoon on June 3, 2007. Those wishing to be confirmed or received into the Episcopal Church will gather with our new bishop, Mark Beckwith at St. Peter's Church in Livingston, NJ. For those who are interested we will have three classes to explore what it means to be a Christian and an Episcopalian. We will meet April 22, 29 and May 6th at 9:00 am in Phillip's office. These classes will go on the same time the Adult Forum is meeting in the Parlor. If you are interested in exploring this please contact Phillip and sign up on one of the flyers in the Sunday Service Guide.

Why We Do What We Do at Redeemer.....

"Together Consecrating the Bread, Wine and Grape Juice"

Even though Redeemer's roots are Episcopal with that rich liturgical tradition, we are concerned that our worship reflect the vision of who we are and how we experience that which is larger than us. I want to direct our attention to the consecration prayer that is said after the bread, wine and grape juice are brought up to the altar and before people are invited to receive communion. Traditionally, at this time, the priest retells the story of Jesus' death, making the bread and wine special and holy.

Tradition says that only the priest has the authority to recite these empowering words. Medieval thinkers claim that the priest has "magic power" in his/her fingers to turn the bread and wine into the body and blood. No matter how you understand it, the Prayer of Consecration has long been the clergy solo act.

Reformed thinkers have understood for years that the entire community, gathered, makes the bread and wine special and not just a clergy person.

Yet, these special words were still reserved for only ordained people. At Redeemer we have rewritten the Consecration Prayer so that we all say the time honored words of Jesus over the bread and wine. That we all consecrate is made obvious by how we do our liturgy. This is a conscious attempt to have "how we do our worship" reflect what we believe about ourselves.

Ordination comes in all shapes and sizes. Yes, clergy people are ordained to carry our specific functions and live under specific accountability.

Also, teachers, doctors, business managers, plumbers and electricians carry our specific functions and live under specific accountability. We all carry our individual ordinations. Ordination comes in all shapes and sizes.

Therefore, it is only fitting that out of our gathered ordinations on a Sunday morning that we together bless the meal we eat. Clergy ordination is just one of many.

How we do what we do is as important as what we do at Redeemer. That is why we say the Prayer of Consecration as we do.
