



**Redeemer Lutheran Church of Leisure World and
St. Theodore of Canterbury Episcopal Church**
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Happy Birthday
December Birthdays

Nancy Luebben *December* 6

January Birthdays

Wendy Alfageme *January* 3
Maria Teresa Smith *January* 8
Cedric Elmer *January* 15
Mickey Costello *January* 19
Evelyn Benedix *January* 20
Carmen Leslie *January* 24
Carl Keene *January* 28

CALENDAR NOTES

Sundays

10:30 a.m. Services

Holy Communion: 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sundays
 Worship Service: 2nd and 4th Sundays

December

December 3: First Sunday of Advent
 Holy Communion Service
December 10: Second Sunday of Advent
 Worship Service
December 17: Third Sunday of Advent
 Holy Communion Service
December 24: Christmas Celebration
 Holy Communion Service

January

January 1: New Years Day
January 6: Epiphany
January 7: Baptism of Our Lord
January 18: Council Meeting
 Annual Reports Due
January 23: Newsletter Articles Due

Emergency Pastoral Care:

If you are in need of **emergency** pastoral care, please call Jerry Brady at (714) 534-2673.
 For anything else, please call the Church number: (562) 598-8697 and leave a message. Messages are checked frequently.

Message from Pastor Lisa

It is with a heavy heart that I must leave Redeemer and each of you at this time, due to my health issues. I have been blessed by your love and care during my time at Redeemer.

I am grateful to the Church Council and people of Redeemer for the opportunity to serve. I am thankful for all the support given to me and my family throughout the time I have served and especially during this time of my illness and recovery.

Thank you for allowing me to shepherd Christ's flock and I will continue to keep the people of Redeemer in my heart and prayers. May the Spirit bless you in all you do moving forward.

Every time I think of you, I thank God for you. I have joy in my heart every time I ask God to help you. I thank God for the joy we share in telling the good news from the very first day until now.

A Happy Christmas to you all and best wishes in the coming new year.

Blessings and Peace,

Pastor Lisa Rotchford

Message from Our President...

Dear Redeemer Family:

The budget for 2024 was passed by the Congregation at Part One of our Annual Meeting on November 12. We also elected four members to the Church Council. Serving for their second three-year terms will be Betty Lucero, Phyllis Mackay, and Kay Pushman, while Doris Weinert was elected for her first three-year term.

The Council will elect new officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer) at the next Council meeting on Thursday, January 16, 2024.

This has been an eventful year, some of its good news and some of it bad.

As you know, our beloved Pastor Lisa Rotchford had some health problems and, by mutual consent with the Church Council, resigned her position as Pastor of Redeemer. We are currently engaged with the Pacifica Synod in efforts to find an Interim Pastor.

The Lord was really good to us giving us the gift of Bishop Emeritus Murray Finck who will preach and preside for the rest of the year.

Please continue your prayers for Pastor Lisa. She is recovering slowly and hopes to be back on her feet soon. She served Redeemer faithfully and with loving care for five years.

This will be my last President's Message as a new leader will be chosen by the Council on January 18. I thank you for the privilege of serving the Lord here at Redeemer and I pray that you would give the new President and the entire Church Council your undivided support.

God Bless You,

Jerry Brady
Council President

Sunday Services



We have colds, flus, and other respiratory illnesses that are easily caught. We thank those who have continued to wear their masks and want everyone to know that masks are available at the entrance of the Church. We **HIGHLY** recommend continuing masking. As we are the most vulnerable population and we have many within the congregation that are immunocompromised. Those who elect to wear masks, should do so freely. It is the expectation that individual preferences be respected and supported for either choice with no justification required.

Holy Communion Changes

Starting on December 3, 2023, we will return to celebrating Holy Communion every other week. When there are five Sundays in the month the Lord's Supper will take place on the first, third, and fifth Sundays with a Service of the Word on the second and fourth Sundays. We no longer will use the pre-packaged Communion elements. The presiding Pastor will distribute the individual bread and the Communion Assistant will follow with the individual wine for all who come to the Communion rail.

Joseph: the Silent Voice in Jesus's Life

We will begin a six-part series the First Sunday of Advent focusing on the earliest days of Jesus, beginning with his miraculous conception and following the biblical witness of his infancy and childhood until he was 12 years old. The sermon messages for this six-part series will look at Jesus' first twelve years through the eyes and life of Joseph, the carpenter from Nazareth and the faithful husband of Mary the mother of Jesus. He was also the earthly father of the child born to be the Savior and Messiah of the world. We will be looking at the biblical passages which tell us about Joseph, a vital and essential figure in the early days and years of Jesus' life, even though his actual voice is never heard in the pages of Holy Scripture. Beginning with the angelic announcement of Jesus' conception, the story of Joseph will help the us comprehend the miracles, the prophecies, the hopes and dreams, the humble birth, and the fulfillment of God's promises as the long-awaited Son of God joined our humanity for the sake of the world God so deeply loves. The series will end on the Day of Epiphany [January 6], that will be celebrated on January 7, 2024.

Welcome New Members



We are again trying to plan an acceptance of new members! Bishop Finck has agreed to accept new members for us so please speak to him. We need to plan a date so please pick up a member's form from the entryway and return it as soon as possible.

A New Way: Christmas Poinsettias



There is a sign-up sheet in the entryway for Poinsettias for Christmas. They are \$8.00 each.

Cookie Exchange



There is a sign-up sheet in the entryway for a cookie exchange we are planning to have on December 24 after our Service.

Annual Meeting Part 1 Results



The Congregational Meeting Part 1 was held on Sunday, November 12th after the Service. The Congregation approved the presented budget for 2024 and elected the following for Council members: Betty Lucero, Phyllis Mackey, Kay Pushman, and Doris Weinert. Thank you to all who attended this important meeting.

Personal Annual Giving Reports

If we have a record of your giving for the 2023 year, it will be sent to you at the end of January. No need to request it be sent!

If you do NOT receive one and think you should have, please contact the Church at (562) 598-8697 or email the Secretary at: redeemer_lutheran@verizon.net. Please wait until

FEBRUARY to contact us about not receiving a report.

Year End Gifts



Year End Gifts are encouraged by many charities at this time of the year. Please remember Redeemer with year-end gifts too. Please pray about a year end gift to your church ~ if you don't, who will?

ANNUAL REPORTS



ALL REPORTS ARE DUE IN THE OFFICE THURSDAY, JANUARY 18, 2024 TO BE INCLUDED IN THE PUBLISHED REPORT FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING ~ PART 2 IN FEBRUARY.

Reports are need from: the Pastor, the Council President, the Financial Secretary, the annual financial report, and the budget for 2023.

All other ministries that wish to submit an annual report are welcome to do so but also need to be in the office by Thursday, January 18th. Thank You!!!

ANNUAL MEETING – PART 2



We will be having our Annual Meeting (Part 2) in **February** after our Worship Service. The Annual Reports will be presented and the delegates for the Annual Synod Assembly will be chosen.

Now might be a time to reflect and pray about your gifts of time, talent and treasure to God through the church. Please pray as we engage in God's work.

FINANCE REPORT
REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH
FINANCE REPORT October 31, 2023



Operating Income of	\$7,857.70
exceeded Operating Expense of	<u>\$6,555.82</u>
by	\$1,301.88

Our Budgeted Income for each month is \$8,341.00

Year to Date: October 31, 2023

We see the following comparing **Actual** to **Budgeted** for the first 10 months of 2023

Our Budgeted income of	\$83,410.00
exceeded our Actual Income of	<u>\$67,167.79</u>
by	(\$16,242.21)

We took in less than budgeted.

Our Budgeted Expenses of	\$83,410.00
was under our Actual Expenses of	<u>\$89,608.60</u>
by	(\$6,198.60)

We spent more than budgeted.

We ended these ten months spending \$22,440.81 more than we took in looking at the ACTUAL amounts and including the annual gift.

Respectfully submitted by,
 Kay Pushman, Finance Chair

We are trying to include a weekly update of our income in the bulletin so everyone knows our current financial status.



CYCLE B – Year of Mark
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT THROUGH
FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

December 3, 2023 – *First Sunday of Advent*
 Isaiah 64:1-9
 Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
 Mark 13:24-37

December 10, 2023 – *Second Sunday of Advent*
 Isaiah 40:1-11
 Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
 2 Peter 3:8-15a
 Mark 1:1-8

December 17, 2023 – *Third Sunday of Advent*

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
Psalm 126
Luke 1:46b-55 (Alternate)
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 24, 2023 – *Fourth Sunday of Advent*

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Luke 1:46b-55
Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26 (Alternate)
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

December 24, 2023 – *Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas Eve*

Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

December 25, 2023 – *Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas Day [II]*

Isaiah 62:6-12
Psalm 97
Titus 3:4-7
Luke 2:[1-7] 8-20

December 25, 2023 – *Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas Day [III]*

Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98
Hebrews 1:1-4 [5-12]
John 1:1-14

December 31, 2023 — *First Sunday of Christmas*

Isaiah 61:10-62:3
Psalm 148
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:22-40

January 6, 2024 — *Epiphany of Our Lord*

Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14
Ephesians 3:1-12
Matthew 2:1-12

January 7, 2024 — *Baptism of Our Lord*

Genesis 1:1-5
Psalm 29
Acts 19:1-7
Mark 1:4-11

January 14, 2024 — *Second Sunday after Epiphany*

1 Samuel 3:1-10 [11-20]
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
1 Corinthians 6:12-20
John 1:43-51

January 21, 2024 — *Third Sunday after Epiphany*

Jonah 3:1-5, 10
Psalm 62:5-12
1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Mark 1:14-20

January 28, 2024 — *Fourth Sunday after Epiphany*

Deuteronomy 18:15-20
Psalm 111
1 Corinthians 8:1-13
Mark 1:21-28

Worship and Discipleship by Margo Geesing

A quick note at the beginning of this article. The Rev. Murray D. Finck, Bishop Emeritus of the Pacifica Synod, is actually going to go off book and do a six-week series looking at the early years of Jesus and the influence of Joseph starting the 1st Sunday of Advent and going through the January 7th Service. This will be a special opportunity to look into the life of Jesus's silent parent, Joseph. We do not hear a lot about him in the Gospels nor do we talk a lot about him but as the male parent in Jesus's life on earth, he would have had a great influence on him. Since at this writing, I do not know what Gospel references he will be using, I am just going to look at the set Gospels during this time. You can look on previous page[s] to find the Gospel lessons for each week.

“Advent to Christmas”

December is here and we begin a new Church Year with the lessons coming from Cycle B: the Gospel of Mark. Mark is probably the first Gospel that was written. It is the shortest and to the point. There's no set up, no background material Mark just jumps in at the beginning of Jesus's public ministry. It ends with the women being told that Jesus has been raised. Nothing else. There is a longer ending which includes, briefly, a couple of Jesus's appearances, the commissioning of the eleven, and the ascension – a mere 12 verses. During Mark's Gospel Jesus is doing, all the time. Jesus is healing, telling stories, and feeding people. It's like a highlight reel at the end of the year. The overall focus of Mark is that the Kingdom of God is coming and we need to be building for that. Jesus also could be seen as being combative with the Jewish power structure.

The first Sunday in December's Gospel from Mark is full of dire portents but, we as Californians understand the power of Mother Nature as we face floods, earthquakes, wildfires, and drought. But just as we face natural disasters, we also prepare and watch for signs of them. This is what we are also called to do as we prepare for Christmas: watch for signs of God in our own lives and be ready.

The second Sunday of Advent we hear from John the Baptist in the Gospel of Mark. He is the herald of Jesus. He called the faithful to repentance and warns them of the one to come. It used to be that you would see signs that said, “*Jesus is coming. Look busy.*” I never really liked it but it had a point. But I saw a new one: “*One does not simply look busy for Jesus.*” which I like much better. We don't need to look busy preparing for Jesus but we need to BE busy preparing for Jesus.

The third Sunday of Advent we hear a similar story of John the Baptist but from the Gospel of John. It shows a confrontation between the priests, Levites, and the Pharisees and John. I really think that smart answers to authorities that are being stupid just runs in that family [Jesus and John the Baptist are cousins]. Because when asked who he was, John didn't give a direct answer but rather quoted from Isaiah. He also basically told them that they were unaware since, “*Among you stands one whom you do not know...*” [John 1:26]. We frequently have sassy Jesus but we also have sassy John.

The fourth Sunday of Advent we would normally get a Gospel from Luke about the annunciation. This is an important moment in our faith story: a young girl said yes to God's plan. Because we all have free will, including Mary, she could have said no. And her response is so calm, "*How can this be, since I am a virgin?*" After the angel explains what will happen, she again responds with devotion to God, "*Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.*" I don't think I would have been very calm about this. But, because of that "yes" we have our own faith journey where we also get to say yes to God's plan for our lives. I just hope we can all answer as calmly and devotedly as Mary.

Instead, we are going to celebrate Christmas on the fourth Sunday of December. We will be hearing the Gospel of Luke and the birth of Jesus and the announcement to the shepherds. I don't know about you, but I always hear this, no matter who is reading it, in Linus Van Pelt's voice from **A Charlie Brown's Christmas**. It is the first announcement of Jesus's birth and it wasn't to great and powerful people. It was to humble shepherds. Jesus's whole ministry was to the poor, downtrodden, powerless, and outcast people; why not announce his birth to those same people. Jesus was born in a stable. He was born to humble parents. When we chase after power and wealth, rather than using our power and wealth to help others we are doing the opposite of what Jesus stood for.

The fifth and final Sunday in December we have the presentation of Jesus at the Temple. There was the custom that the first-born male child was presented to God. There were two very old people, Simeon and Anna, at the Temple. These were people who had waited their whole lives to see this miracle. They had obviously been told by the Holy Spirit that they would be witnesses to this. Simeon was so contented by this gift that he praised God by saying that the fulfillment of his life was done. This Gospel reminds us all that Jesus and his parents were Jewish and devout in their own faith, following the rites and rituals. It is also a reminder to us that our own faith is rooted in the Jewish faith. Our forefather was also Abraham. Our faith journey began thousands of years ago and continues today and through us, onward into the future.

"They Grow Up So Fast"

The first Sunday in January is officially the Baptism of Our Lord but we are also celebrating the Epiphany of Our Lord. At Christmas we had Jesus presented to the lowly in the presence of the shepherds. Last Sunday we had Jesus presented to the Jewish people in the Temple and through Simeon and Anna. This week we have Jesus presented to the world and the powerful in the Magi and the knowledge of King Herod. Each group reacted differently. Much of their reaction was based on who they were. The shepherds reacted with fear and then with excitement. Simeon and Anna reacted with joy, completion, and need to proclaim it to others. The Magi reacted with joy and humbleness. King Herod reacted with jealousy and fear. I think it depends on how you relate to Jesus how his birth affects you. Also, our reactions can change over time.

The Baptism of Our Lord is the public demonstration that he is starting a new phase of his life, his public ministry. He did not need John's baptism. He did not need to repent. In fact, John was heralding Jesus's coming with a new baptism. Rather, Jesus did this because he chose to be human. He lived as a human being and experienced life as we do. At Jesus's baptism we hear that the voice of the Father says, "*You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.*" Because of Jesus's life, death, and resurrection we, too, at our own baptism, were welcomed into that same family with Jesus.

The second week of January we hear from the Gospel of John and the calling of the first disciples. The interesting thing is that Jesus does no persuading or explaining, although he does answer Nathanael's question. He just says, follow me. How many of us would follow some random guy who says, follow me; even if someone we trusted said he was a good person? We would have questions. Why? Where are we going? What are we doing? Who are you? But that isn't what happens here. Nathanael comes out with a declaration of faith instead. This is why Jesus is different. Those who follow him see that difference. We see beyond the human and see the divine. We may not know exactly where we are going or what we will be doing or everything about Jesus; but we are willing to find out. To follow. To come and see. It will not be easy but always interesting!

The third Sunday after Epiphany we have our first declaration of the Kingdom of God, "*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near, repent, and believe in the good news.*" and another version of the calling of the disciples from the Gospel of Mark. Jesus's message is the same as John the Baptist's: repent and believe. Again, people are just dropping their lives and following Jesus. It's crazy. There's no detail in the thought process for any of these people. Maybe it was time for a change for them. Maybe they were tired of fishing. Maybe they were ready for a new adventure. The thing is, Jesus calls each of us in a unique way, at different points in our lives, and for different reasons. Each of us answers that call in our own way. Some are called to change their lives completely. Some are called to live their lives more completely. Some are called to simply live lives of faithful devotion where they are and as they are. The thing is, each of us are called and each of us answer in a unique way. We cannot and should not judge which are better or worse; that's God's job. What we can and should do is live our lives answering that call everyday and helping others to do the same.

The last Sunday in January we have two moments of Jesus's authority. The first is within the synagogue. He taught with authority. He used words. He obviously said something new or unusual; we are not told what it was, but it was something that people had to comment on and be amazed. The second was still in the synagogue but was an action. He commanded the unclean spirit that was torturing a man to come out and it did. Jesus was not just a man of words but also a man of actions. He taught much; usually in parables; but he also did things. He healed, fed, and touched people. His words and actions are in sync. His word **and** actions **are** the transforming message. We can say we are people of faith. We can say we are Christians. What we do tells about our faith and what it means to be a Christian. It is through hope and grace that our words and actions are in sync and send a transforming message to others.

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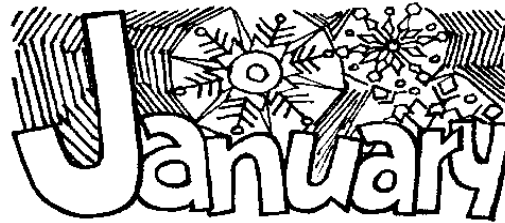


website: www.redeemerlutheransealbeach.com

2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3 FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT 10:30 Holy Communion Service	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT 10:30 Worship Service		12	13	14	15	16
17 THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT 10:30 Holy Communion Service	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 [FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT CHRISTMAS EVE] CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION 10:30 Holy Communion Service	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26	27	28	29	30
30 10:30 Holy Communion Service Birthdays Celebrated	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE					

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2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 NEW YEAR'S DAY	2	3	4	5	6 EPIPHANY DAY
7 BAPTISM OF OUR LORD 10:30 Holy Communion Service	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 10:30 Worship Service	15 DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY	16	17	18 2:30 p.m. – Council Meeting Annual Reports Due in the Office	19	20
21 10:30 Holy Communion Service	22	23 Articles for Newsletter Due	24	25 2023 Giving Statements will be sent this week	26	27
28 10:30 Worship Service Birthdays Celebrated	29	30	31			