

# RedeemerReview

## I MAY BE WRONG, BUT HERE'S WHAT I THINK

I was recently listening to a podcast I love called *Cautionary Tales*, and I heard about a fascinating concept in psychology: *the illusion of explanatory depth*. Basically, it refers to our consistent tendency to overestimate how well we understand the world around us.

For example, a team of researchers asked study participants to rate, on a scale of 1 to 7, how well they understood how an everyday object such as a flush toilet works. After rating their understanding, the study participants were handed a sheet of paper and asked to explain how the item works in as much detail as possible. They could use words or diagrams or whatever form they found most appropriate. Afterwards, the researchers asked the study participants to again rate, on a scale of 1 to 7, how well they understood how the item works. As you may guess, people realized, after having to actually share their explanations, that they didn't realize how the item works quite as well as they'd initially thought.

Researchers have done similar studies with questions of public policy. So, for example, a study participant might have been asked to rate how well he or she understood a policy such as a cap-and-trade system or economic sanctions on a hostile country. Then the participant would be asked to explain the policy in as much depth as possible. After being asked to explain the policy in detail, the participants tended to find that they

understood the policy less well than they'd thought. Interestingly, this process also reduced the levels of political polarization in the study participants.

So what, you may be asking? Who cares?

Over the coming months, our country will be entering into the heat of primary election season and the partisanship of general elections. For those of us who are American citizens, our ability to think and listen and speak and vote is an incredible gift. Participating in democratic self-government in a country as prosperous and powerful as ours is an awesome responsibility. It calls for us to steward these rights and responsibilities well. These are truly acts of faithfulness and discipleship. Or at least they ought to be. So often though, political engagement seems to bring out the worst in us rather than the best.

But this really isn't something unique to our particular political situation or even to politics more generally. It goes deeper than that. It has to do with how we work together, how we make decisions together, how we listen and

speak, how we disagree. Anytime the stakes are high (as they certainly are with flush toilets and climate policy) and more than one person is involved (as there certainly is with climate policy but hopefully is not with a flush toilet), we're faced with the challenge of different people having different experiences and different priorities and different ideas.

### Holy Week & Easter

April 9 — Maundy Thursday

April 10 — Good Friday

April 12 — Easter



\*See page 5 for details.

Winter  
2019-2020

### This Issue's Highlights:

**Property Updates**  
p. 3

**Lent, Holy Week Schedule**  
p. 5

**ION Update**  
p. 6

**Fall Service Projects**  
p. 7

**Third Place Chicago**  
p. 9

**Kids Ministry Update**  
p. 10

**Calendar**  
p. 12

*continued from p. 1*

Knowing about the illusion of explanatory depth should humble us. It should slow us down and make us ask ourselves how much we *really* know about what we're discussing.

That absolutely does *not* mean that we shouldn't speak, or even, at times, speak forcefully. There are things that we really *do* know: that God values each and every person, that God's desire for the world is good, that compassion and mercy and forgiveness and unconditional love are what we're made to receive and to give. There are many things that you know as an individual with all the explanatory depth you could ever need: how you feel about a loved one, how Jesus has changed your life, what you were made to do in this world.

But I'd wager there are many other things that you believe or understand based not on your own knowledge but, rather, indirectly because experts agree or a trusted teacher taught it to you. This is certainly the case for me. Often, we're remembering what we think we heard on a news report by a reporter who took good notes during interviews with a few experts who read an academic paper about a years-long double-blind study with moderately strong conclusions. That's fine! That's good! It's a good way to learn! But—and this is important—it's also *possible* something got distorted a little bit in that long game of telephone. Or it's possible another study had contrasting results. Or it's possible we're not remembering everything or understanding its significance with perfect accuracy.

The Bible scholar N. T. Wright has said, "I frequently tell my students that quite a high proportion of what I say is probably wrong, or at least flawed or skewed in some way which I do not at the moment realize. The only problem is that I do not know which bits are wrong; if I did I might do something about it."

This is a helpful reminder for us all. We're all wrong about some things. That is about as certain a statement as we can make. So it would be wise for all of us, most of the time, to think to ourselves and say to others "I might be wrong about this, but here's what I think." By all means, speak! Share what you think! You very well might be right, and God forbid you leave others in darkness. But think how much better our conversations could be if we saw them as a humble search for truth rather than a winner-take-all contest.

As a congregation, over the years to come, we'll be engaging in a lot of experiments. We'll be trying to determine how best to follow God's leading in our particular time and place. Some of these experiments will have thrilling results. Some will be utter failures. You'll like some of them. You may think some of them are about as foolish as can be. As we enter into new and uncharted waters, we'll be tested. We'll be tested in how we work together, in how we disagree, in how we speak, in how we listen.

May we cling uncompromisingly to the truth and to Jesus who is himself Truth. And, in a world that tries to turn us against each other, may we, in genuine joy and humility, learn to say, with smiles on our faces, "I may be wrong, but here's what I think."

—Pastor Peter

## A BRIGHTER, MORE EFFICIENT BUILDING

If you feel like the building is looking a bit brighter, you aren't mistaken. After taking advantage of a rebate program offered by Commonwealth Edison, we were able to replace almost all of the lighting on the west side of the building. Due to the age of the fixtures, it was a constant struggle to keep all of the lights working, so this couldn't have come at a better time. When taking into account the cost to replace and fix the previous lights and the overall energy savings that come from switching to LED, the upgrade will have paid for itself in under two years. Thanks to Dick Buchholtz for overseeing the installation and acting as a liaison with the contractor.

We also recently upgraded the system we use to put up the volleyball net in the gym. Users no longer need to carry out the heavy poles or anchor the net into screws on the gym floor. Instead they're now able to attach the net to the walls and use a crank to create the tension needed to keep the net taut. Gym renters were previously using 10-20 minutes of their rental time just to get the net set up. This will also increase the ease for us to schedule periodic "mixed-skill" volleyball games after worship on Sunday. Fun fact: the wood used to mount the net was repurposed from pews that used to be in the sanctuary at Redeemer on North Avenue. Dick Buchholtz spent time sanding and staining the wood before installing them with George Miler and Larry Kusch. Thanks to all of them for their hard work.

Other things you may have noticed are general patching and painting in Meeting Room 1 and touch-up painting outside the conference room, in the breezeway, in the narthex, and in the downstairs restrooms. Thanks to Rob Panknin for all the work he did in these areas.

We've been blessed with a beautiful building and we want to make sure we're good stewards of it, so if you notice or have questions about something property-related, talk with Pastor Dan ([dan@redeemerchicago.com](mailto:dan@redeemerchicago.com)).



## KITCHEN MAKEOVER

In last year's budget we included money to give a facelift to the parsonage kitchen. We are happy to report that the majority of the work has been completed. A new floor was put down in the kitchen and adjoining utility room, and a new sink and granite countertops were installed. Rachel and Pastor Dan then gave the cabinets an update by priming and painting them white and installing new cabinet hardware.

In addition to updating the kitchen, there was significant painting done throughout the parsonage in the time between Pastor Fred and Pastor Carol's departure and Pastor Dan and Rachel's move-in. A big thanks to Mike Anzalotti, Rob Panknin, Dick Buchholtz, and some other family and friends for the time and effort they put in painting, sanding, and scraping in October and November!



Before



After

## VISION AND STRATEGY TEAM RETREAT

Over the past few months the Vision and Strategy Team has been reading and discussing the book *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory*, by Tod Bolsinger. The premise of the book is that the decrease in regular church attendance and the increase of those who report their religious affiliation as “none” in North America provides the Church with the daunting and exciting opportunity to share the gospel. Bolsinger argues that rather than relying on strategies of the past (open the doors and wait for people to come), we must be willing to uncover what is core to our DNA as a congregation and then experiment (without fear of failure) with different ways to reach people with the gospel.

Our reading and discussion led to an overnight retreat at Techny Towers in Northbrook on January 24-25. All seven elected leaders of VST, along with Pastor Dan, Pastor Peter, and Rachel Quest, were in attendance. Beginning with dinner on Friday night, VST spent the retreat in Bible study, a team-building activity, discussion of what we believe Redeemer’s fundamental mission to be, and what we see as core to Redeemer Church’s DNA.

This short retreat was both encouraging and energizing. VST will continue talking about insights gained by reading *Canoeing the Mountains* as we seek to faithfully follow where we believe God is leading Redeemer over the coming months and years.

## MY COACHNET TRAINING

In the Spring of 2017, Pastor Fred and I attended a training event called *Coach Launch* at Luther Seminary in Minnesota. I didn’t know exactly what to expect—just that the ELCA was providing training to help people develop their coaching skills, something I knew I wanted to do. At this training, I learned that there’s an organization called the International Coach Federation (ICF) who establishes the standards, requirements, code of ethics, and accreditation process for trained coaches worldwide. I learned that the Coach Launch training event I was attending, while hosted by the ELCA, was the first course offered by CoachNet, an organization that trains coaches for ICF accreditation. (Last spring, Redeemer hosted a Coach Launch training weekend at Third Place Chicago, which many of Redeemer’s coaches attended.)

I love coaching. I love the culture of listening and growth it establishes, and I love seeing how creatively people establish and reach their goals. In 2019, I felt called to begin working toward a coaching accreditation. By that time, we at Redeemer had decided to grow our coaching ministry and make it a more central tool for evangelism and discipleship. At the same time, we received some generous grant money from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, which opened doors for us to grow our coaching ministry, including ongoing training.

I’ve now completed the online coursework required to be an Associate Certified Coach (ACC), which includes *Understanding My Behavior in Coaching*, *Establishing the Ideal Intake Process*, *Deep Listening Skills*, and *Asking Powerful Questions*. I also completed a “Lab” devoted to practice and feedback, a final course on masterful coaching, and 10 hours of mentorship with an accredited coach. I’ve learned a lot. I hope this will benefit our ministry and the development of Redeemer’s coaches.

To receive my accreditation, I still need to submit my practice hours, pass the Completion of Coach Knowledge Assessment, and undergo a performance evaluation. I hope to accomplish this in the next few months and ask for your prayers along the way.

—Rachel Quest



## SPRING MESSAGE SERIES

### How to Be Real

March 1 & 8

This series will look at how growth and transformation allow us to live with true authenticity. The gospel call to follow Jesus is neither an invitation to a loss of self nor is it an invitation to stagnant, stubborn expression of oneself just as one is. Rather, the gospel invites us to be (even demands that we be) new selves, both radically transformed and radically ourselves.

### Jesus in Jerusalem

March 15-April 12

We'll spend five Sundays, along with Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, following the story of Jesus in the city of Jerusalem, a story culminating in his execution and resurrection from death. We'll talk about what Jesus taught and what Jesus did, and about what these teachings and actions mean for us and our world.

## Focus on Worship

## LENT, HOLY WEEK, AND EASTER

Join us during this important season of reflection upon the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

### Ash Wednesday

February 26 at 7:30pm

### Midweek Lenten Meal & Worship

Wednesdays, March 4 - April 1

6:00pm Soup Supper in the gym

7:00pm Holden Evening Prayer in the sanctuary

### Maundy Thursday Prayer Service

Thursday, April 9, 7:30pm

### Good Friday Worship

Friday, April 10, 7:30pm

### Easter Celebration

Sunday, April 12

8:30am Traditional Worship

10:00am Easter Breakfast & Kids' Egg Hunt

11:00am Contemporary Worship



## TRYING SOMETHING NEW ON SUNDAY MORNINGS

Over the past few months, to prioritize spiritual growth, we've been including time for discussion and reflection after the messages during Sunday morning worship. Research has shown that discussing what we've heard with other people helps us to connect the message to our own lives and helps us to recall the major points of the teaching after they've faded from short-term memory. So we've been trying this experiment to see if it has positive effects on our ability to apply God's message to our lives and grow spiritually.

The Vision and Strategy Team is now in the process of gathering feedback on what's going well and what needs adjustment. This will help us to determine if this is an experiment that's worth continuing and, if it is, what adjustments we can make to maximize its benefits and minimize any negative effects going forward.

## Focus on Evangelism

### OUR NEW WEBSITE

In October we launched our redesigned website at [www.redeemerchicago.com](http://www.redeemerchicago.com). Significantly pared down in content, the site loads much faster and highlights content that matters most to first-time visitors (spiritual growth coaching, our core values, worship times, upcoming events, etc.). In preparation for the new site, we hired a video crew to come to Fall Kickoff and film us during worship. They chose a handful of shots that could be edited into a quick looping video that gives an idea of the look and feel of our community. In keeping with our strategic pivot to spiritual growth coaching, there is a prominent link where visitors can request to meet with a spiritual growth coach or provide contact info to download a PDF we created called *Lasting Change: 4 Things That Work, 4 Things That Don't*. For those who provide contact info and download the PDF, we can follow up to encourage them to schedule an appointment with one of our spiritual growth coaches. We've seen a lot of activity on the website, as well as downloads of the PDF, requests for coaching, and first-time guests at Redeemer events.

### AN INVITATION TO GROW

At the beginning of January we sent out a postcard mailing for both Redeemer Church and Third Place Chicago focused on Spiritual Growth Coaching. This was a big opportunity to gauge whether our strategic pivot to spiritual growth coaching is something that resonates to those who aren't currently connected to a faith community. We're pleased to say that the response from those who have received the postcard has been very positive. We've seen new people visiting our website, checking out worship on Sunday mornings, and reaching out to schedule a spiritual growth coaching session at Redeemer or Third Place Chicago. We're currently working on the design of our next postcard, which we plan to send out in March. Please continue to pray that God will bless our efforts to reach those who are receptive to exploring what a relationship with God might look like, and be ready to welcome new friends!



### INSIDE OUT NETWORK UPDATE

With Pastor Fred's departure, our prison ministry has gone through some changes; however, we're still very much involved with what God is up to among our incarcerated siblings and returning citizens.

First, our next trip to Stateville will take place on Saturday, April 18. This opportunity to visit and pray with our brothers at Stateville has been formative for many who have experienced it. All adults are encouraged to participate. If you're even thinking about going, please reach out to Aneel by the end of February. You can always back out, but you can't go if you miss this first deadline.

Second, our pen pal ministry is thriving under Paul Palandri. He is always looking for more penpals and prayer partners—reach out to him if you're interested.

Third, we're hosting a huddle for returning citizens, families, friends, and all others at Third Place Chicago on February 27 at 7pm. Through this event, we hope to connect to the community and hear stories of the struggles and joys of life after incarceration.

And finally, a quick update from Pastor Fred about the amazing progress that we've seen with Inside Out Network since his departure to Arizona: The Department of Corrections in Arizona met with Pastor Fred and is quite excited about using ION for its returning citizens—so much so, that they would like to allow access to ION and encourage inmates to enroll while still incarcerated. This breakthrough should open doors to create relationships with local service providers in Arizona. It's hard to overstate what a big deal this is—we've been working toward this type of institutional relationship with a department of corrections for years, and this may very well be the breakthrough we've been hoping for.

Please do keep all volunteers and this ministry in general in your prayers. Thanks, and reach out to Aneel at [aneel@insideoutnetwork.net](mailto:aneel@insideoutnetwork.net) or Paul at [ppalandri@comcast.net](mailto:ppalandri@comcast.net) to get involved!



## FALL SERVICE EVENTS

### Focus on Service

#### Cards for Hospitalized Kids



#### Sunday Supper

### WE REACHED OUR GOOD GIFTS GOAL!

During the Advent and Christmas seasons, Redeemer once again chose to give to ELCA Good Gifts, a ministry in our denomination that provides the most critical resources for areas in great need around the globe. This includes agricultural resources, animals, food, clean water, leadership and vocational training, disaster response, and health care. We invited everyone to contribute to a goal of \$3,000, which we thought was both realistic and ambitious based on what we've seen in previous years. We're pleased to say that together we raised \$3,540, and we asked that our donation be given to wherever the need is greatest. Thank you for having a positive impact on people's lives.



## Focus on Fellowship

### ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY



### FALL WOMEN'S RETREAT: REFLECTING AND LOOKING AHEAD

Taking a deep breath has practically become a reflex for me every time I pull into a parking spot on the edge of the simple, lovely grounds of the Portiuncula Center for Prayer. "The Port" in Frankfort, Illinois has been the site of our annual women's retreat for many years, and I have come to associate this place with rest, friendship, conversation, simplicity, and fun.

This past fall, our retreat group was made up of 12 women from Redeemer Park Ridge and Redeemer on North Avenue. We spent our time on the topic "Life Reflections," and we experimented with a variety of prayer practices that all invited us to look back—at our day, at our year, at our life. We also blocked off plenty of free time, so everyone had the flexibility to use the time the way they needed to. Collectively, we talked, we read books, we walked the grounds and the prayer labyrinth, we napped, we snacked, we played games and assembled puzzles, we practiced yoga, and we created works of art. I have personally come to treasure this time to slow down among my sisters in Christ.

It's never too early to mark your calendars for our next retreat. We've reserved our usual spot at the Portiuncula Center for Prayer in Frankfort on the weekend of October 9-10.

—Rachel Quest



## FAREWELL



At the end of October we said farewell to our beloved pastors of over 19 years, Fred and Carol. The event was filled with tears and laughs, visits from old friends, and even dancing! We offer a heartfelt *thank you* to Fred and Carol for their faithful service to our church and for everyone who helped us to celebrate well that day.

## FELLOWSHIP AT THIRD PLACE CHICAGO

God didn't intend for us to live in isolation. We were made for community! At Third Place Chicago, community has taken the form of game nights, book clubs, and potlucks. Psalm 133 says, "How good it is when God's people live together in unity!" This has been so true of the time spent together at Third Place.

Since summertime we've been gathering at Third Place for some good old fashioned board games. We order pizza, pull out our favorite games, and let the conversation flow. Through regular game nights, we've gotten to interact with our Jefferson Park neighbors who have found game nights to be a welcoming and relaxing way to spend a Friday evening. All are welcome!

Not only are we playing together at Third Place, we're also reading together. Linda Gonzales has been leading a monthly book club on the first Monday of the month. We've read Celeste Ng's *Little Fires Everywhere*, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and many others. This book club has been great for us to not only read more but read more broadly than we ever would on our own. This book club is fun and open to anyone who loves reading or wants to fit more reading into their life.

Last but not least, this past holiday season we gathered again at Third Place for our second annual Thanksgiving Potluck! The room was filled with food, friends, and fun. There's something special about the simple act of bringing a dish you love to share with friends old and new. People left that evening full from the good food and the good memories of an evening spent in community.

Praise God for his goodness!

—Jade Schwich



## WHEN I FIRST HEARD ABOUT MOPS

When I first heard about MOPS/MOMsnext, I didn't know what to expect. I knew it was a mothers' group, but apart from that, I didn't really understand what it was until I did my research.

I learned that when I first arrived I would sign my child in to childcare, so they could have fun, while I got to have a couple of hours of child-free time to connect with other moms just like me. I would then have an amazing morning with fabulous women. I would be able to drink my coffee while it was still hot and eat some yummy treats, without having to share! That, in itself, sounded really amazing! I wondered what I would do at MOPS/MOMsnext, and found out that, while each week is different, I would always have the chance to talk about a variety of parenting topics, and also have time to share about my motherhood journey.

*continued on p. 10*



MOPS & MOMSNEXT

*continued from p. 9*

Now we have our very own MOPS/MOMSnex group held at Third Place Chicago the first Saturday of the month, from 9:30-11:30am. Come join us for guest speakers, videos, discussions, crafts, volunteer opportunities, and fun. MOPS/MOMSnex is a nationally-supported organization that gathers moms to support each other through the journey of motherhood. We believe in the simple, but revolutionary, idea that remarkable things happen when moms come together, face-to-face. That's why we rally women to come together in their own neighborhoods and help each other through this thing called motherhood, one gathering at a time.

Whether you are a soon-to-be mom, first-time mom, or seventh-time mom, you are welcome here. Whether you are an adoptive mom, young mom, seasoned mom, foster mom, stepmom or any other type of mom, you are welcome here. Moms who have children, no matter the age, are welcome. Our gatherings are where moms can meet to share their hopes, fears, and insights in a format that works with their schedule. Come join us for honest conversations about the joys and frustrations of motherhood, take a break from the routine of life, have some fun, make new friendships, and build support networks.

—Christin Anzalotti

To learn more about MOPS, visit [www.mops.org](http://www.mops.org) or contact Christin Anzalotti ([cas.edtherapy@gmail.com](mailto:cas.edtherapy@gmail.com)).

## Focus on Discipleship

### KIDS MINISTRY: LEARNING AND LIVING THE WORD

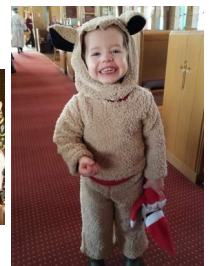
On Sunday mornings, kids in preschool through fifth grade gather in the family room for a lesson from *Living the Word*. We spent September through December looking at stories from the Old Testament focused on the topics "Responding to God's Love," "God's Way of Leading," and "God's Faithfulness." In the new year, we're learning stories about Jesus and what he said about the Kingdom of God in the book of Mark. Our time together includes interactive storytelling, games, crafts, songs, coloring, and prayer. And Sunday school always concludes with the kids and leaders speaking Aaron's blessing to one another before they head into worship.

Our kids' ministry team leaders are Aryl Charlton, Shannon Gonzales, Jose Gonzales, Nora Pielet, Julie Szafraniec, Alysén Terretta, and Sara Trivedi. Thank you to each of these gifted and generous leaders for the unique part they play in fostering our kids' spiritual growth.

—Rachel Quest

#### *Our Purpose*

*The children's ministry at Redeemer Church exists so kids, alongside their parents, will grow as disciples of Jesus, know they belong in the body of Christ, worship with their church family, learn to serve generously, and enjoy living their faith daily.*



Redeemer's Sunday school kids and members of the youth group gave us an important (and fun) reminder of what's most important at Christmas by sharing *The Present You Won't Find under the Tree* by our own Julie Szafraniec.

## FEBRUARY COACH TRAINING

On February 29-March 1, we're holding our next round of coach training. This will be a two-day intensive focused on the nuts and bolts of coaching. We'll dig into topics like how to adopt a coaching mindset, how to facilitate coaching conversation, and how to ask powerful questions.

We'll also spend plenty of time actually practicing coaching one another. Our current team of spiritual growth coaches also continues to meet on Sunday mornings once a month for ongoing development and practice.

If you have questions about our coach training process or about the spiritual growth coaching ministry of Redeemer Church and Third Place Chicago, please contact Rachel ([rachel@redeemerchicago.com](mailto:rachel@redeemerchicago.com)).



## COACHING SPOTLIGHT: WHAT ARE PEOPLE ACTUALLY DOING TO GROW?

Thinking of trying a new spiritual practice to share your thoughts with God but don't know where to start?

How about with just one word?

Journaling just isn't my thing, but the idea of a gratitude journal—where you document occurrences you're thankful for every day—is such a lovely idea. So I make the practice manageable for me.

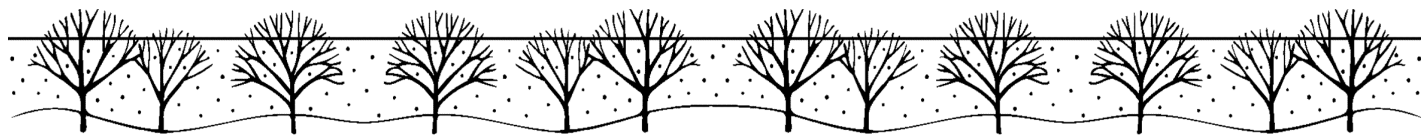
At the end of every day I take up my notebook and jot down the date, followed by just one word noting something I'm grateful for in that day, and then just one word describing something I'm giving to God that I worried over, feared, or stressed about in that day. When this became too routine, I added a note on one thing I learned about someone else in an encounter with them that day. I wanted to take ownership of the idea that we learn something new every day. I value relationships with others so highly that I thought it would be helpful for me to connect the two. Even if it seems like a little thing, like "Jeffrey—likes cashews," daily reflection reminds me that God fills each of us with neat little traits (and it even helps me be able to look back and think of good birthday presents, or ways to lift people up when they're down).

I don't get too strict about it being only one word I note for the Gratitude and Letting Go piece—it gets stressful if I feel like I have to condense what I'm feeling—so sometimes it turns into writing out a series of words, or a complete thought. But I found early on in the practice that I often get carried away by what I'm worrying over. To balance that, I try to write down at least an equal amount of what I'm grateful for as what I'm letting go of and giving to God. This turns my need for control over to God as I recognize God's blessings and watch them conquer the worries.

—Petra Rickertson

## Calendar of Events

February 26	Ash Wednesday Worship
February 27	Returning Citizens Talks
March 3	Senior Luncheon
March 4	Lenten Soup Supper
March 11	Lenten Soup Supper
March 18	Lenten Soup Supper
March 25	Lenten Soup Supper
April 1	Lenten Soup Supper
April 7	Senior Luncheon
April 9	Maundy Thursday Worship
April 10	Good Friday Worship
April 12	Easter



## Transitions

**Livia Paola Carlisle**, daughter of John and Mary Carlisle, was baptized on September 8, 2019.

Longtime member **Helen Nekola** passed away on December 30, 2019.

