



December 2023



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The Good Newsletter of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

A Message from Pastor Karsten—Asante, Asante Asante sana.....

Those were the words heard over and over again in Tanzania when visiting our sister parish at Kidewa and their surrounding preaching points. The words mean thank you, thank you, thank you very much. It was a heartfelt greeting when those words were spoken, be they while walking down the road with people, gathering for worship, eating together or in prayer. There is gratefulness and thankfulness for the partnership we share.

Kidewa is a quiet and rather remote village nestled up to the edge of a small mountainside. There are mud huts for homes scattered throughout the area. There might be 1000 people in a few mile radius, and more father down the main road. The land was bare as it is dry season but it is obvious that most of it will again be covered with corn in the months ahead. The people wave, even run alongside the vehicle, and the contentment is palatable.

There is something wonderful and special about this place and the people. The women are beautiful in their colorful garments and easy smiles. The men have strong musical voices and value the community that most have known as home their whole life. There is a special love of the Lord within this place and the value of the church cannot be overstated.

One of the women who helps lead this wide partnership with the Lutheran churches in the St Paul Area Synod (57 congregations have a partner church) says this about the people; "they have nothing, but they have everything." There is little wealth here as clothing is basic and worn many days at a time. There are few gadgets or even balls to occupy the children. Working odd jobs for the day or helping in neighboring fields might get someone 10,000 Tanzania shillings – worth about \$4. A Pastor makes about \$75 a month. But they are rich in what it means to be community with and for one another. There is a storehouse of delight in each church we visited; Kidewa as the home parish also has six preaching points stretching down the single road in the area.



This partnership has led to the building of one new church over the past four years, helping to send 30 people through a special three-year leadership training program, has annually covered costs for a handful of youth to attend secondary school, and inspired dedicated work on other houses and church walls. Our Redeemer is in their prayers regularly and deeply valued. Asante sana for living into this relationship and partnership that breathes extra life into these communities and provides a way for us to be tied (Bega Kwa Bega – shoulder to shoulder) to the wider world for our good.

Come join me on **Sunday, December 10**, during fellowship time to see pictures and hear more stories about this recent visit to our partners at Kidewa.

Pastor Karsten

Practical Perspective on Prayer

With the help of our Intern Becky Sliva, Our Redeemer had an emphasis on prayer. While Our Redeemer has always been a prayerful community, we had the opportunity to increase and refresh our knowledge and practices of prayer. Some people pray and have devotions in the morning, while some pray in the evening, while some people pray intermittently during the day. There is no wrong time to pray. Pastor Karsten told us the average Christian prays for eight minutes each day. There isn't a time limit on prayers. Some people follow the Five Finger Prayer format while others use the ACTS format (Adoration, Confessions, Thanksgiving, Supplication). There is no wrong way to pray. Some prayers are joyful and thanksgiving while others are laments or requests. Again, no wrong way to pray. Some prayers are longer and some are shorter. Sometimes "Lord have mercy" or "Thank You God" are long enough.

At this time the prayer card requests will continue. We will continue to pray as individuals and as groups, allowing for opportunities for us to talk to God and for God to talk to us.

[See article below on how you can submit your prayers and praises to us.]

Send us your Prayers & Praises Requests

Please keep sending us your *Prayers & Praises!*

There are three easy ways:

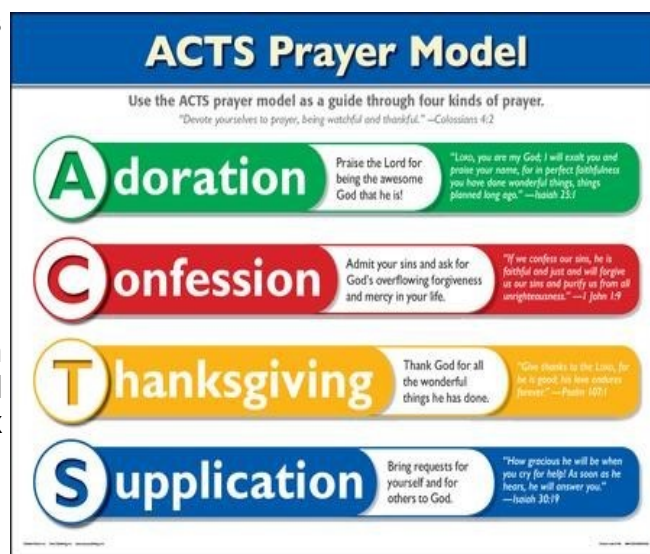
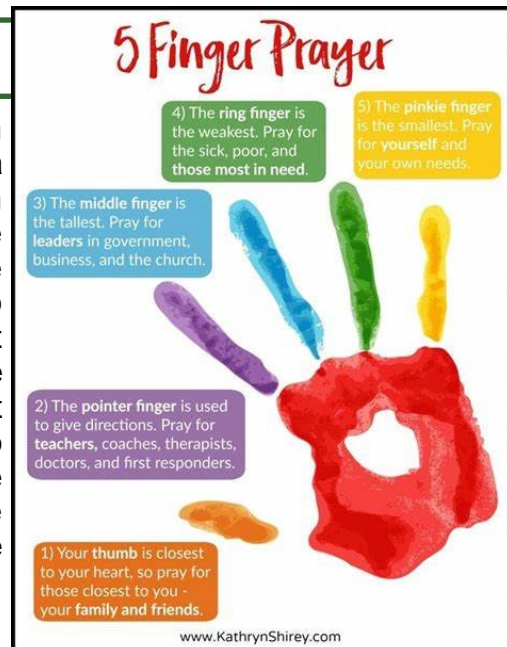


- Pick up a prayer card from the basket on the Welcome Desk and place completed card in envelope and insert into Prayer Box slot located on the Welcome Desk.
- Email your prayers to prayers@orlcmn.org.
- Scan the QR code (shown on the left).

You can choose to have your requests for prayers confidentially or shared with others by selecting one of the following: for the Pastor only, for the Pastor and Prayer Ministry Team, or publicly in the bulletins/newsletters. If you give us permission to announce your prayers publicly, they will appear in the bulletin for two consecutive weeks and possibly in the newsletter.

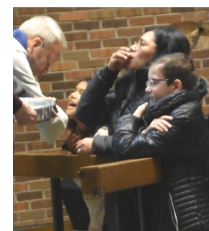
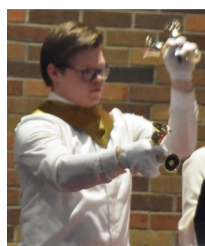
Our Redeemer Prayer Ministry Team: Cherie Kilbride, Dianne Derks, Barb Maynard, Joan Paulson, & Kathi Kirchoff. Please let them know if you have any questions or would like to join the team in any capacity.

Also, everyone is invited to stay after worship on the first Sunday of the month for a group prayer near the front of the Sanctuary.



Potential Charter School

We have been in some early but very promising conversations with a new charter school that is interested in utilizing space at Our Redeemer to begin a new elementary school, open to the public, and with a special draw to the Karen community—a more recent immigrant population from the area of Myanmar. Their Board and our Board are having separate conversations about what this partnership might look like and what steps would need to be taken for a school to begin here next fall. We will keep you informed about more details in the weeks ahead. If you would be interested in joining the team, please contact the office or talk to Pastor Karsten.



December Worship Services—Scriptures & Lectors

Date	Scriptures (Click on links below)	Lectors
3	Isaiah 64:1-9 ; Mark 13:24-37	Jim Burke
10	Isaiah 40:1-11 ; Mark 1:1-8	Dianne Derks
17	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 ; John 1:6-8, 19-28	Jane Koza
24	10 AM: Isaiah 9:2-7 ; Luke 2:1-14 10 PM: Isaiah 62:6-12 ; Luke 2:8-20	Jessica Morgan (10 AM) Cherie Kilbride (10 PM)
31	<i>Various TBD or our Lessons & Carols Service</i>	Dianne Derks, Scott Torvi, Lana Larson, Cherie Kilbride
<i>If you wish to be a part of our services (lector, technology, musically, faith-sharing), please contact the office.</i>		



Advent Stillness Service

What a wonderful and remarkable season we have for these next weeks! Scripture, songs, and decorations will draw our hearts into the story of God coming into the world in the birth of the baby Jesus. Join us for Advent Stillness Services on Wednesday evenings, **December 6, 13, 20** from **6:40 to 7:00 p.m.** for some evening quiet to center our lives during this Advent season. The short service will include some song, scripture and prayer with interspersed periods of quiet reflection.

The invitations for sharing our food and clothing will help keep our hearts focused on the neighbors around us. And in the stillness and darkness of the season we will be stirred to remember that we do await the promised return of God. Come dwell with us for some holy moments. All are welcome.



Sunday, December 24 Services—Christmas Eve

Since Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year, we will be having our morning worship service on **December 24** at **10:00 a.m.** and one Christmas Eve candlelight and communion service at **10:00 p.m.** Please invite your family and friends to come along with you. ALL ARE WELCOME!

Christmas Flower Garden

A wonderful way to remember your loved ones, or honor special people in your life, is to purchase a poinsettia plant that will also provide a beautiful garden setting in our Sanctuary for our two Christmas Eve worship services. The cost is \$15 per plan and there are forms at the Welcome Desk or you can contact the office. After completing the form, return it with your offering or to the office by **Wednesday, December 20**, with your payment. Make checks payable to *Our Redeemer Lutheran Church* (or ORLC) and indicate "Christmas Plants" in the memo section. Another option is to email Sally at office@orlcmn.org and make a payment in our online donation link at the top of the first page of this newsletter (selecting the Online Offering and select General Fund). *[Plants can be picked up after our Christmas Eve services or you can request that they be given to a shut-in.]*

Sunday School

We are inviting any school age children to come join us every week for Sunday School from 11:00 to 11:40 a.m. following regular worship services.

Musicians Welcomed

We are still welcoming anyone with musical desires to join us in our worship services, so if interested, please don't hesitate to reach out to Jeremy Mattson, our Worship and Service Director.





2024 Stewardship—With Faithful Hearts There's still time to send in your intent card!

The last couple of months you received two stewardship letters, one that spoke how Apostle Paul wrote about his gratefulness for the faithfulness of the people in the churches he helped start and then a second letter including an Intent Card asking for your commitment in maintaining Our Redeemer's strength and purpose to be faithful in our daily lives as we are about to begin our budget planning for 2024.

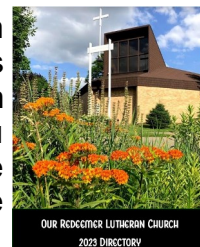
The Stewardship Team would like to thank those of you who have turned in your cards. If you have not yet dropped off your card, please do so soon. There are extra cards in a basket on the Welcome Desk. If we haven't received yours, we will be sending a reminder. As we draw to the close of another fiscal year, your generous year-end giving will help us try to reach our budget and sustain the good ministry that happens at and through Our Redeemer.

2023 Pledges & Contributions

As we approach 2023 year-end, please feel free to contact our finance administrator, Jill Rodriguez, for where you are at toward your 2023 pledge and contributions. The easiest way to contact her is by email jill@orlcmn.org. Not only do we accept cash and checks, we also have an online giving platform called VANCO. If you have any questions, please contact me. It is a fairly easy platform to use and can be found on the church's website at www.orlcmn.org. Just choose Giving/Donate & Secure Online Donation. At this time we are set up for General Fund and Community Sharing donations on VANCO.

Church Directory App

A new feature of our church directory is that we received an app for those interested in having the directory accessible on their smartphone and/or tablet. If you would like this app, send Sally an email at office@orlcmn.org and she will give you instructions which includes your unique identifier code. Also, let her know if you have any changes you wish to be made to your directory listing for the app. And if you were not able to have your photo taken to be included in the directory and you would like one added to the directory app, you can send Sally a photo and she can upload it.



Giving "back" this season with a Reverse Advent Calendar —a project of the EastSide Collaborative

Our EastSide Collaborative (ESCo) is sponsoring another Reverse Advent Calendar event—giving instead of receiving! The idea is simple—beginning December 1, each day until Christmas Eve add an item to the grocery bag we will provide. We hope this will inspire you to engage in a slower-paced giving opportunity either through prayer or deep appreciation of what you are thankful for this holiday season. Attached to the bag is a list of recommended items. Bring your filled bags back to church and they will be donated to the North St. Paul Food Shelf. Even if we don't receive your final donations until the end of December, the food shelves are always in need and appreciative! You can pick up a grocery bag today—they are located near the Welcome Desk (or fill one you have at home).



December —Regular Happenings

4	Women in Christ (usually 3rd Monday)	6:00 PM
4	Lives Worth Living	6:30 PM
7	Rejoice Circle	1:00 PM
11	Quilting	9:00 AM
12	Building Crew	9:30 AM
12	Hope Circle	7:00 PM
16	U.F.O. Crafting Day	8:00 AM
18	Lives Worth Living	6:30 PM
19	Board Meeting	7:00 PM
21	Knitting & Crocheting	6:30 PM



DECEMBER

2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Weekly Events

Bible Study—Every Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. in the Fireside Room and on Zoom

Men's Bible Study—Every Thursday at 7:30 a.m.

TOPS—Every Monday at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

Maplewood Gamblers Anonymous— Every Thursday at 7:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

(1st Thursday of month is open for guests)

Christmas Eve Worship Services:

Sunday, December 24

10:00 a.m. & 10:00 p.m.

(No services on Christmas Day)

Ways to Give to Our Redeemer



Giving of Your Offerings

- Mail your offering/envelope to the ORLC office: 1390 Larpenteur Ave E, St. Paul MN 55109
- Drop off your offering/envelope in the locked mailbox located near our front entrance.
- Make an online offering at the link www.orlcmn.org/donate, which is also available on the first page of our website (www.orlcmn.org) by clicking the "Make Donation" button. Set up an automatic one-time donation or recurring withdrawals from your financial institution, or by using a credit card. (NOTE: There is a 2% fee to use a credit card.)
- Text 844-871-2328, enter amount in message line, send, and then follow instructions to complete.

Purchasing of Gift Cards—Sold two Sundays this month

When you purchase gift cards through Our Redeemer's "Bucks for Our Building" program, a percentage of your gift card value is given back to church. Remember—the more you buy, the more our church earns! Email Barb at: bemay1635@gmail.com. Or visit her table on the first Sunday of each month. This month, she will also be selling them on the third Sunday as well (December 17).



Giving of Thrivent Dollars

Are you a Thrivent member? If so, check your Thrivent accounts regularly for Choice dollars that may have accumulated which can be designated to Our Redeemer or as you choose. If not, become a member—contact the office for details.

Estate Plan Giving

Consider giving through your estate planning directives. Name ORLC in your will to receive a portion of your assets: IRA, stocks, vehicle, boat, camper, house, etc.

Fundraising

Support Our Redeemer's various fundraisers throughout the year!

Staff of Our Redeemer

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Jeremy Mattson

Worship & Music Director

Music.orlcmn@gmail.com

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Office Administrator

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Jim Vansell, Custodian

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Board Members

Carmen Snaza, President

Vicki Anderson

Joe France

Judy Koza

Sharon Peterson

Larry Pruden

Beth Renfors

Deb Spencer

Contact Information

1390 Larpenteur Avenue East

Saint Paul, MN 55109

651-772-2445

office@orlcmn.org

www.orlcmn.org

facebook.com/orlcmn

Please send us your prayer requests: prayers@orlcmn.org



Annual Cookie Shop—Saturday, December 9

The Children, Youth, and Family Ministry (CYF) is planning for their **Annual Cookie Shop** to be held **Saturday, December 9, from 9 a.m. to Noon or until sold out.** Proceeds go to the CYF fund for camperships, vacation bible school (VBS), and mission trips.

Donated cookies can be dropped off at church Friday, December 8 from 3 to 7 p.m. Pre-orders available upon request for congregation members, but will be limited to 2 dozen per type of cookie. Contact Cherie Kilbride at sc400@comcast.net or 612-703-8535 for more information.

A Good Local Mission—Clothing needed!

We are collecting clothing for North High School students through December 10. They are in need of long sleeve shirts, zip-up hoodies, sweatpants, gloves, and winter hats for some of the students. They are especially in need of new or gently worn men's/boys' warm clothes. If you are going through your closets this fall, please think of North High. The mission committee will also be collecting clothes later for Tartan and Johnson High Schools during the winter months. Items of clothing may be placed in the marked containers located in the Narthex.

Thank you for caring, The Mission Committee



Confirmation

We have been enjoying a great fall with our Confirmation program. The core of our time together with our six middle school youth is focused on teaching with a focus this year on Lutheran Groundings - things like Justification, Grace, Who is the neighbor. We meet twice a month and tend to these sessions either on retreat (back in October), or meeting at Our Redeemer or at Cross Lutheran (and their four students). Monthly we also gather with 5



other St Paul Lutheran congregations for special outings. We also have some service projects - like at Community Sharing or helping at Project Home. Nice relationships are being built and there is some good learning taking place too. Here is a note from one of our students: *Hi, my name is Farrah, and this is what I like about confirmation. First, it allows you to be your authentic self. Secondly, every person in the service won't judge you based on your race, etc. Lastly, everyone here is talkative and calm. These are my three things that I like about confirmation. And another: Our Redeemer has a GREAT basketball hoop!*



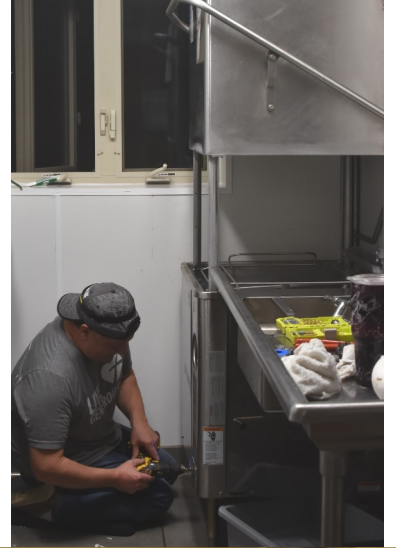
3 - Holly Forsberg	20 - Judy Koza
5 - Martha Freeman	24 - Becky Pruden
10 - Scott Torvi	29 - Audrey Lerdahl
12 - Baryogar Johnson	30 - Charlee France
13 - Dick Peterson	30 - Elizabeth Nelson
13 - Julie Peterson	31 - Dianne Derks
25 - JESUS	
*If your birthday is not shown in this month and it should be (or if you prefer your birthday not be announced in the future), please contact the office.	

Women in Christ "Thank You!" and Future Scheduled Meetings

A special thanks to **Joan Paulson**, one of our military servants, who gave a presentation for the *Women In Christ* event on November 4 where she told about her career as a nurse during the Vietnam War. *Women in Christ* meets every third Monday for study, service, and social events at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall, which begins with a light supper. If you have questions or would like further information, contact Kathi Kirchoff at 651-245-3533.



Here's our Joan!



Community Sharing Wednesdays

We continue to be grateful to be able to provide our free meals and groceries to serve our community through our Wednesday Community Sharing program. We are still averaging about 200 meals every week. We have around 65 cars and several walk up guests weekly and with homemade meals coming from Loaves & Fishes, and rescue food coming from the Merrick and North St. Paul food shelves allowing us to provide over \$3,000 worth of groceries. People continue to communicate their appreciation for this help. To receive meals and groceries, mark your calendar for our **Community Sharing on Wednesdays** from **5:30 to 6:30 p.m.** ALL ARE WELCOME! To volunteer, you can sign up at church or online at <https://bit.ly/loaves-fishes>. There are many various options for volunteering, so if you can help on a regular or even occasional basis, here are our main needs:



- Wednesdays (approx.) 12:00 — 4:00 p.m. assisting the chef with food preparation.
- Wednesdays (approx.) 3:00—5:00 p.m. sorting through the boxes of groceries.
- Wednesdays (approx.) 5:00—6:45 p.m. filling take-out meals, bagging food orders, taking/delivering orders to vehicles in drive-thru, and clean up.



Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
1390 Larpenteur Avenue East
St. Paul, MN 55109

**DATED MATERIAL
DO NOT DELAY**

Address Service Requested