



February 2024



Worship  
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Offerings  
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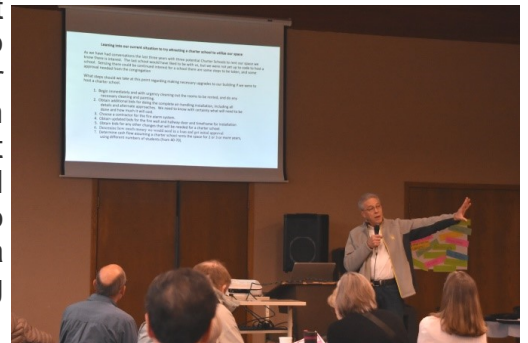
## The Good Newsletter of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church



### A Recap of our Annual Congregational Meeting

We had our annual meeting on Sunday, January 28, with 43 people in attendance. We reviewed the 2023 financials, highlighted a lower-than-expected income, but also a lower-than-expected total expenses. This meant we ended the year with a \$3,075 deficit. As we then leaned into the 2024 budget that was formally adopted, we noted a \$10,000 anticipated drop in member giving as well as utilizing less in dedicated funds to supplement our income. There was a Board commitment to provide for three percent increases for staff. Meeting this would require \$10,000 in additional income and still leave us about

\$9,155 in the red (behind) for the budget - \$346,233 budgeted income vs \$355,388 budgeted expenses. A decision was made to have a one time 'Ministry Support 2024' invitation for extra congregational giving – a letter was included in all year-end giving statements. *(See update on page three.)*



We also review the year as Pastor Karsten presented slides detailing the 'Faithful' work of Our Redeemer toward its membership, the local community, and the wider world. Some work ahead will be making decisions around possibly making upgrades that could draw in a charter school, being more intentional about our invitation/outreach especially to older residents, and having a new 'Long-Range Financial Planning Team' look into recent income history and exploring various options for income in the years ahead – this could include using cell tower money, selling off some lots on our east end of the east parking lot, and potentially hosting a charter school.



We heard more about what would be needed if we were to try hosting a charter school and spoke about options, we do have in regards to the cell tower. We agreed that if there is action to be taken on school renovations or cell tower options, there will be another congregational meeting for information and applicable votes.

We were glad to welcome Doreen Winter to a one-year term on the Church Board, and also have Beth Renfors and Carmen Snaza be reelected to one-year terms on the Board. Thanks went out to so many people who help make meaningful ministry and compassionate care a deep part of the fabric of Our Redeemer.



# Worship With Us

IN-PERSON & ONLINE

Every Sunday at 10:00 a.m.  
<https://bit.ly/orlcworship>

## February Worship Services—Scriptures & Lectors

Date	Scriptures (Click on links below)	Lectors
4	<a href="#">Isaiah 40:21-31</a> ; <a href="#">Mark 1:29-39</a>	Jim Burke
11	<a href="#">2 Kings 2:1-12</a> ; <a href="#">Mark 9:2-9</a>	Lana Larsen
18	<a href="#">Psalm 25:1-10</a> ; <a href="#">Luke 5:1-11</a>	Holly Forsberg
25	<a href="#">Psalm 22:23-31</a> ; <a href="#">Matthew 14:22-23</a>	Scott Torvi

*If you wish to be a part of our services (lector, technology, musically, faith-sharing), please contact the office.*

## Lent - Wednesday Services & Meals

What a wonderful season Lent is in the life of the church and the life of individual believers. These six weeks leading up to Easter have historically been a time of extra introspection, a fuller time of devotion, a deeper time of disciplines, and a wide sense of care for the neighbor. We hope that can be the case again as we walk through Lent this year.



We begin with **Ash Wednesday** worship on **February 14, at 7:00 p. m.** But if you come at **6:15 p.m.**, you can join us for a meal tied into our Community Sharing program – special tables will be set up and you will see the end of the night in full activity while enjoying some good fellowship over a meal. This food gathering will take place each Wednesday at 6:15 p.m. through the end of March. A free will offering will be received to support Community Sharing. Worship time will be at **6:45 p.m.** on these other Lenten Wednesdays.

Part of what we will be reminded of at the start of Lent is trying to find a good discipline to take on to help your spiritual life. It might be utilizing devotions or faith-based reading. It might be taking more time for prayer. You might choose to be more generous with financial gifts to organizations. You might choose to be a part of a Bible study. Often Lent is a time when people choose to give up something (that too can be a spiritual discipline) it is better lived by taking something else on. Ponder what that might mean for you.

Two resources to help with your Lent this year will be a devotion booklet put out by 'A Sanctified Art' that will bring scripture, reflections, art, questions, and prayers for your use – we have used a similar devotion the past two years with great response. The other resource is a calendar-based activity packet from the EastSide Collaboration (ESCo) that leads one to doing acts of special care while alternating taking time for guided reading and reflection. Both of these resources can be found on the Welcome Desk, or call the office if you would like us to send you one or both.

## Wandering Heart—Figuring out faith with Peter

During our Sunday worship we are going to be focusing on the life and faith of one of Jesus most famous disciples – Peter. In Peter we find a person who is both steadfast and unsteady, a dear friend and a betrayer, a follower and a wanderer. In Peter we often see ourselves, and my following his journey it will no doubt speak to us about our own journey of faith. Come let this Lent be a time to foster our constant journey and steadfast pursuit of following Christ.



## Ministry Support 2024–Update

What a generous community! We wanted to share the good news that already we have heard back from everyone on the Board and another 12 people who made a gift/commitment to the ‘Ministry Support 2024’ appeal to help us meet our budget needs for this year. At the January 31 Annual Meeting, we approved a 2024 budget that required raising \$10,000 in extra gifts from the congregation. And that was going to still leave us with a \$9,000 shortfall. But in these early weeks of this special request, we have already raised \$25,000. That helps us meet our budget and will not require utilizing other dedicated funds we had been planning to use. Any additional gifts to this appeal will help lead us to an even stronger financial base for this year. You can complete the form you received with your year-end giving statements or you can contact the office. Thank you!

## February is Black History Month—What does Black History Month mean to you?

*In honor of Black History Month, ELCA Racial Justice Ministries invited Seminarian Clair Minson to share some thoughts about this topic with our readers. (copied with permission from Living Lutheran, ELCA)*

What began as “Negro History Week” in 1926 — created by historian Dr. Carter G. Woodson out of his concern that young African Americans lacked an education about their own heritage and ancestors — has since expanded to what we now know and observe as “Black History Month.” Woodson, a life-long educator, understood the power of knowing one’s history and one’s ancestral heritage. Knowing that you are part of a long legacy of people who have the capacity to create whole societies can ground you in the belief that you too can do anything. Not knowing this history can become a seeding ground for internalized oppression. As Nikole Hannah-Jones writes in her book *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story*, “The vision of the past I absorbed from school textbooks, television, and the local history museum depicted a world, perhaps a wishful one, where Black people did not really exist. This history rendered Black Americans, Black people on all the earth, inconsequential at best, invisible at worst.” I suspect that this erasure of Black his- and her-story is what Woodson was confronting through the development of Negro History Week.



As people of faith, steeped in the tradition of remembering and honoring our ancestors, we know the power of hearing, repeating and internalizing the miraculous stories of Moses, Joshua, Mary and Paul. Despite thousands of years of separation, we rely on these stories to help us cling to our faith and to a God who can at times feel very distant, despite always being with us. Understanding this, we perhaps also understand that recalling the stories of our Black ancestors is equally as powerful and necessary. In preparation for this blog, I sat with the question “What does Black History Month mean to me?” and after some time an answer surfaced. To me, Black History Month is not just an obligatory nod to African American people; it’s a reminder of the strength and resilience of a people who, despite being erased from history and relegated to the margins of society, continue to contribute to the flourishing of our society. It’s a reminder of who we are and whose we are. It’s a reminder from “whence we came” and a vision for where we can go. It’s a clarion call to those who feel lost and need a reminder that their stories and their lives matter.

Black History Month is an opportunity for us as Christians to live into our call to be countercultural and share histories that many in society want to censure. It is an opportunity to live into the commitments we have made as a denomination to honor, protect and value the lives of people of African descent. I ask you, as people of faith, steeped in the tradition of remembering and honoring our ancestors, the same question: *What does Black History Month mean to you?*

## Urgent Need For A Host Family

I am the director for MN with International Experience and I have an exchange student enrolled at North High School in North St. Paul this year - his name is Ismael. By no fault of his, the host family is no longer able to host him for personal/family reasons. We are urgently seeking a new host home for him for the remainder of the school year and we need a family immediately, even just temporarily! Ismael is 15, from Spain, and loves soccer, basketball, video games, watching sports, and auto racing. He is a great kid, on the shy side. Please let me know as this would be immensely helpful in ensuring he can stay at North High School in the same school community for the remainder of his exchange. Thank you, Mandy McClellan, Regional Director, North Central, Call 612-695-2855 or email [m.mcclellan@international-experience.net](mailto:m.mcclellan@international-experience.net).



## New Member Class

If you are interested in learning more about Our Redeemer and leaning into being a fuller part of this community of faith, we would welcome you to be part of the next new member class. This will be taking place over two meetings in March on days/times that fit for those who are interested in participating. Please see Pastor Karsten for more details or if you have questions.

## Confirmation

Our faith journeys are always a life-long experience. It is really nice when some of that foundation gets laid in our early years to hear and learn Biblical stories and to be woven into a community. This very experience is happening right now in the Confirmation program we have at Our Redeemer. In conjunction with Cross Lutheran, we gather our middle school youth together multiple times a month for class time (focusing on Lutheran foundations) as well as monthly larger social and learning activities in partnership with five other Saint Paul area Lutheran congregations. Add in to this a cabin retreat we had in October and a half dozen nights of volunteering at Community Sharing, and this is a great place/time to help form the faith and form some friendships.



To give you a taste of recent activity, our teaching has focused on the themes of Justification by Faith, The Cross, Saint and Sinner, Grace, The Neighbor and upcoming will be on Holy Week, Vocation, The Devil, and Doubt. And in our Deep Dive (with 8 local churches) last month, we visited Lutheran Social Services and through various stations learned much more about *Homelessness* for youth, *Adoption*, *Refugee* resettlement, and the work of *Advocacy*. In February we will be enjoying an afternoon of indoor rock climbing (connected with a theme of trusting in God) and in March there is a special music concert planned.



This is one more way Our Redeemer is living into our mission of *Transforming Lives and Building Community by Loving God and serving others*. Thanks to the youth who are attending and the adults who are supporting this good activity.

## The Lenten Challenge

Join the EastSide Collaborative Lutheran churches (Arlington Hills, Grace, Gustavus Adolphus and Our Redeemer) for another great Lenten challenge—similar to last year! It will consist of the 40 days of Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14, and ends on the Saturday (March 30) before Easter Sunday, March 31. During Lent, many people choose to give up something or do something additional to reflect on God's blessings in our lives. We are challenging you to do both! Throughout the 40 days, we will give you suggestions or guidance such as reading a scripture, praying for a specific need, calling a friend or shut-in, listening to a hymn, walking around your neighborhood (or within your building complex), giving up an item from your home to give to someone in need, etc. Coming soon, we will make available a "Challenge" guide along with a paper bag for your donations to be given to the Alley Shoppe at Arlington Hills that has provided clothing and household goods to families in need since 1970.



*[Did you know that the 40 days of Lent do not include Sundays? Here's some history: Since all Sundays—and not simply Easter Sunday—were days to celebrate Christ's Resurrection, Christians were forbidden to fast and do other forms of penance on those days. Therefore, when the Church expanded the period of fasting and prayer in preparation for Easter from a few days to 40 days (to mirror Christ's fasting in the desert, before He began His public ministry), Sundays could not be included in the count. Therefore, in order for Lent to include 40 days on which fasting could occur, it had to be expanded to six full weeks (with six days of fasting in each week) plus four extra days—Ash Wednesday and the Thursday, Friday, and Saturday that follow it.]*

February—Regular Happenings		
1	Rejoice Circle	1:00 PM
5	Lives Worth Living	6:30 PM
12	Quilting	9:00 AM
13	Building Crew	9:30 AM
13	Hope Circle	7:00 PM
15	Knitting & Crocheting	6:30 PM
17	U.F.O. Crafting Day	8:00 AM
19	Lives Worth Living	6:30 PM
19	Women in Christ	6:00 PM
20	Board Meeting	7:00 PM
26	Quilting	9:00 AM

February 2024						
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		

### 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)*

### Office Phone—Under Construction

**651-772-2445 is the correct number but we are unable to record a message. Comcast is working on the problem.**



## 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](http://www.orlcmn.org/donate), which is also available on the first page of our website ([www.orlcmn.org](http://www.orlcmn.org)) by clicking the "Giving/Donate" button and in the dropdown box, select "Secure Online Donation." Select "General" contribution 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 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

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. Purchase them for gift giving or for yourself (i.e., for gas, groceries, restaurants, etc.) Remember—the more you buy, the more our church earns! Email Barb at: [bemay1635@gmail.com](mailto:bemay1635@gmail.com). Or visit her table in the Narthex on the first Sunday of each month.



### 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

**Pastor Karsten Nelson**  
651-772-2445 x 102  
[karsten@orlcmn.org](mailto:karsten@orlcmn.org)

**Jeremy Mattson**  
Worship & Music Director  
[Music.orlcmn@gmail.com](mailto:Music.orlcmn@gmail.com)

**Sally Kupferschmidt**  
Office Administrator  
651-772-2445 x 101  
[office@orlcmn.org](mailto:office@orlcmn.org)

**Jill Rodriguez**  
Finance Administrator  
651-772-2445 x 101  
[Jill@orlcmn.org](mailto:Jill@orlcmn.org)

**Jim Vansell**, Custodian  
651-772-2445

### Board Members

**Carmen Snaza**, President  
**Vicki Anderson**  
**Joe France**  
**Judy Koza**  
**Sharon Peterson**  
**Larry Pruden**  
**Beth Renfors**  
**Deb Spencer**  
**Doreen Winter**

### Contact Information

**1390 Larpenteur Avenue East**  
**Saint Paul, MN 55109**  
**651-772-2445**  
**[office@orlcmn.org](mailto:office@orlcmn.org)**  
**[www.orlcmn.org](http://www.orlcmn.org)**  
**[facebook.com/orlcmn](https://facebook.com/orlcmn)**

*Please send us your prayer requests: [prayers@orlcmn.org](mailto:prayers@orlcmn.org)*



## 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](mailto:prayers@orlcmn.org).
- Scan the QR code



## Thrivent Members—Choice Dollars

Please check your Thrivent accounts and designate any Choice Dollars which have accumulated in 2023. (After March 31, Choice Dollars are distributed by the company to charitable organizations, rather than by you.) Our Redeemer's budget can benefit from your diligence and generosity!



## Women's Valentine's Luncheon

The ORLC Women's Valentine luncheon is at the Olive Garden restaurant on Beam Avenue in Maplewood on **Saturday, February 10**, at 11 a.m. Women from our church and female friends are invited. Each person pays for their own lunch and if possible, wears red (or pink) and brings a Valentine to exchange. Contact Judy Koza if interested at [jl8888@outlook.com](mailto:jl8888@outlook.com). *(RSVP date has passed but contact her in case there are spaces that become available.)*

## Maplewood Public Safety Citizens Academy

The Maplewood Public Safety Department will be hosting a Citizens Academy beginning March 26 through April 30. They are looking for participants for a unique experience and a valuable opportunity to get to know other stakeholders and residents in the Maplewood community. There will be three weeks at the Police Station focusing on police work and three weeks focusing on fire and paramedic work. If interested, please contact Barb Johnson, Community Outreach Specialist, 651-249-2636, [barb.johnson@maplewoodmn.gov](mailto:barb.johnson@maplewoodmn.gov).



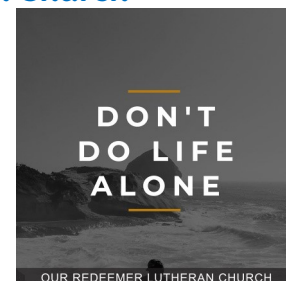
## Reminders—FIRST Sunday of the Month!

- **Bring Your Aluminum Cans to Church**—leave them outside our front doors.
- **Purchase Your Gift Cards**—stop by the gift card table and pick up cards that we have on hand or special order others from a list of hundreds of retailers. Request cards any other time of the month by contacting Barb Maynard at [bezm09@comcast.net](mailto:bezm09@comcast.net) AND [office@orlcmn.org](mailto:office@orlcmn.org).
- **Prayers for the People**—after worship service, join the prayer team member in the Sanctuary for special prayer time.



## ATTN: Facebook Folks!

Remember to LIKE  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
on Facebook!



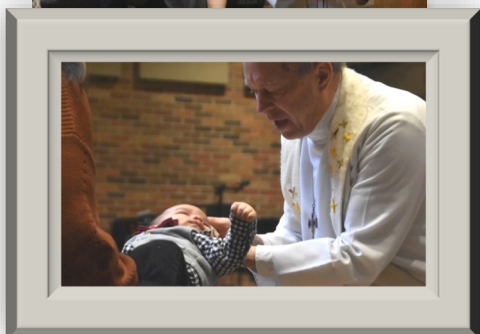
4 Rhonda DeGross	14 Jim Burke
5 Jennifer Houge	14 Carla Shipstad
6 Plogbo Freeman	21 Natalie Forsberg
8 Becky Sliva	24 Mary Luhrs
10 Carol Kringle	<i>*Are we missing your birthday?</i>

*\*If your birthday is not shown in this month and it should be (or if it is, and you prefer your birthday not be announced in the future), please contact the office. Also, let us know if we can announce your MILESTONE birthdays or anniversaries.*





Our newest member of  
Our Redeemer!  
*Julian Asher Hinrichs France*



Jackie and  
Rosie—  
Where did you  
find snow in  
Minnesota??





## Community Sharing Wednesdays

Thank you for helping us feed the hungry!

Our **Community Sharing on Wednesdays** from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. continue to grow, and we have many of you to thank! Whether you volunteer on occasion or every Wednesday, or pick up grocery food from stores or food shelves, or donate money, or gift a Thrivent grant, we appreciate it as does many of the recipients. Thank you! If you haven't had the chance to do so and would like to, here's how you can get started:

- \* **To volunteer on Wednesday, contact the office or go online at <https://bit.ly/loaves-fishes>**

These are our volunteering opportunities:

12:00—4:00 p.m. assisting the chef with food preparation.

3:00—5:00 p.m. sorting through the boxes of groceries.

5:00—7:00 p.m. filling take-out meals, bagging food orders, taking/delivering orders to vehicles in drive-thru, and clean up in fellowship hall.

Did you know that some employers donate money to our Community Sharing program if their employees volunteer? 3M is a great example—check with your employer!

- \* **To donate money, drop off in our mailbox or go online at [www.orlcmn.org/donate](http://www.orlcmn.org/donate); or text 844-871-2328, enter amount in message line, send, and follow instructions.**

If you wish to receive a free meal and groceries, come experience our drive-up Community Sharing on Wednesdays from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. **ALL ARE WELCOME!**



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

**DATED MATERIAL  
DO NOT DELAY**

**Address Service Requested**