

Redeemer

Discovering Christ's community through building relationships

NOVEMBER ~ DECEMBER 2025

This is a monthly newsletter
Of Redeemer's Lutheran
Church, Oak Forest, IL
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STAFF

Supply Pstr Soren Flessen

Office Admin. Deb Frawley

Music Coord. – Jan Strojny

Pianist/Organ– Amy Ogarek

President- Steve Nowlan

Vice President- Art James

As the season of Thanksgiving approaches in the United States, Christians focus on Thanksgiving as a way of life: *"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus"* ~ 1 Thessalonians 5:18

We celebrate Holy Communion or "Eucharist" weekly. Eucharist is the Greek word which means "thanksgiving," and grounds our lives in the presence of Jesus, his spirit of thanksgiving and service. In Holy Communion, we give thanks for Jesus' sacrificial love for all and the gift of forgiveness in his Body and Blood for our forgiveness. We build our lives on gratitude, not fear, and trust that Christ lives

in and among us throughout the week. We draw encouragement from the communion of the saints who join us at the altar and walk with us by faith.

I am thankful for our life together as a congregation and the different ways that each of you express gratitude for God's goodness. Thank you all who serve in the following ways:

- **Lead and communicate** God's mission, including church council, and web page coordinator.
- **Care for the building and grounds** to be a safe and welcoming place to gather.
- **Prepare and lead worship**, including altar, music, office staff, ushers, lectors, and flowers.
- **Contribute financially** with tithes of gratitude to ensure that the mission continues.
- **Lead mission projects** such as the food pantry/holiday meals, project Christmas child, together we cope, and all of the recovery groups hosted on site every week.
- **Pray for God's guidance and comfort** that we might be faithful, find comfort and peace.
- **Invite, remember, and visit** all who need hope and community in their lives.

Thank you all for responding to God's love and participating in Jesus' mission of hope and healing for the world. May the completion of this church year and the holy days of Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas center us on God's steadfast love and birth among us.

In gratitude,
Pastor Soren Flessen



GRATEFUL ♥ THANKFUL ♥ BLESSED

Redeemer's family,

Greetings! And blessings to all. It's hard to believe this is the last newsletter of the year~ where does the time go so fast? It has been another busy year for our congregation and ministries. I am proud and grateful for all the groups we help each year here at Redeemer's by providing space for healing and meeting. We have 9 twelve step meetings that gather here for recovery each week, Anointed Word congregation that worships here on Sundays, a very active food pantry and various other gatherings that we provide space for throughout the year. These are all forms of benevolence that we support continuously. I know that God is alive and thriving in this building and community!



Notes
from our President

We have had some financial challenges this year that had to be addressed and taken care of, but we met them head-on and dealt with them as a unified congregation. The council asked everyone to consider a "special" gift to help re-build our reserve funds by the end of the year. I am so very proud and grateful in the response we have received so far. Redeemer's congregation has always responded when special needs are required with love and generosity, please keep it up till the end of the year. So far, with the sale of 2 of our burial spots and the extra gifts received so far, we have been able to raise close to \$9,000 and we still have two months of the year left. Many thanks and gratefulness from your church council. May God continue to bless us all and show us the way.

By the time you receive this newsletter, you will have had a chance to review the proposed 2026 budget. On November 9th after worship we will have a short congregational Meeting to vote and answer any questions you may have on the proposed budget.

In closing, I would like to wish everyone a joyous and wonderful Merry Christmas. Let us all celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ and His love in this world.



Peace and Love,
Steve

**CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT WORSHIP
WITH HOLY COMMUNION ~ 7PM**





WOMAN TO WOMAN

Come join me in entering into the holidays without the teeter and totter in our emotions. Here's how:

- 1) Set more-sane house goals. Better to plan less and accomplish more than to fall short of your ideal and start your holidays feeling disappointed.
- 2) Shop early, and buy a couple of generic emergency gifts. (unlike some kitschy socks, a box of fine chocolates holds general appeal).
- 3) Settle on a reasonable budget before going into the stores to prevent falling victim to strong sales tactics (which include Christmas mood music that plays on our nostalgia, sale-sign seduction, and plastic explosives in the form of credit cards.
- 4) Sow the seeds of goodwill, but don't expect every "Scrooge" in your Christmas circle to embrace your efforts.... Or you, for that matter. Don't snowball your own emotions by expecting love from people who can't give it. (History in a relationship is usually a good benchmark of his or her ability.)
- 5) Seek some silence. Balance your busyness with moments of meditation. Don't allow all the flashing lights on the outside to distract you from the inner light of His presence. Even a short silence each day will give a greater semblance of order to your emotions and schedule. So, in case you're still feeling a little overwhelmed, here's some suggestions to celebrate simply:

Make a snow angel, drink eggnog, write a forgotten friend, decorate a snowman, go caroling, bake cookies, share tea with a friend, hug a child, hug an oldster, read the Christmas story out loud and, lastly, sing Happy Birthday to Jesus.

Til next time, nice chatting with you.....Jan Strojny

NEWS FROM THE CHURCH COUNCIL



It's the most wonderful time of the year! We celebrate Thanksgiving and go into the advent season anticipating the birth of our Messiah, Jesus Christ. It's the season of giving and no one does it better than Redeemer's!

We are so extremely thankful to all who made the gift of benevolence to shore up our reserve funds and to that end, we have decided not to have a giving tree this year.

You may still purchase toys for Together We Cope, but you'll have to deliver them. This is only for this year.

Once again, thank you for your support and dedication to our church, our home.

Blessed Christmas season to all.



Meet **Saturday, November 29** at 9:30am- at Redeemer's.
We will decorate the church for advent!!

A small shoebox can have a big impact. What goes into the box is fun, but what comes out of it is eternal. Be a part of changing children's lives all over the world in Jesus' Name through the power of a simple gift with Operation Christmas Child. Once again we will be filling shoe boxes- plastic or cardboard with small gifts to send to a boy or girl overseas. There are direction & idea sheets available from Linda McHugh. Please bring the boxes to church anytime until November 16. Then they will be delivered to the drop off point. Let's show the children around the world that we care.



Once again I will be doing Thanksgiving dinners and Christmas dinners/w stockings for the kids. The Thanksgiving event will be held on Saturday the Nov. 22nd, and the Christmas event will be held on Saturday the Dec. 20th. Rather than put a list in the newsletter, I'll have Deb put them in the weekly bulletin. For the Christmas stockings, they will be for children from 1-12. The Dollar store is a great place to find things, or small denominations of gift cards from McDonalds or the like, are welcomed These events are so needed in the community and people count on them to make their holidays easier. I am truly blessed to be able to have the support to do these events.

Marilyn

It is time to order your holiday **Poinsettias!** These are displayed in the chancel during the Christmas Eve service and then can be brought home to decorate your home or give to others. The cost this year is **\$15.00** ~please put in a separate envelope with your name on it and place in the offering plate. Sign-up sheets are now available and need to be paid for by December 14.



~We will meet on Saturday, Jan. 3 at 9:30am,
to take down the church decorations~

On All Saints Day, we remember all the saints who have touched our lives and have entered eternal life this past year.

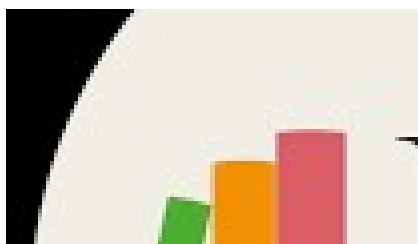
We thank God for giving them to us to know and to love:

Tom Knechtges, Florence Johnson, Frank D'Alessandro, Delores Skowronski, Roger Kellogg, Velina Worden, Peggy Blair, Loren Dobe, Aurelio Ulloa, Chloe Polzin, Trisha Williams, Judy Okray, Natalie Gryga, Mary McNelis, Kris Pupek, Bob Fitzgerald, Ruth Riordan, Robert Marquardt, Bob Guzinski, Georgia Karash, Nancy Byrom, Ida Mae Walsh, Shirley Aggen, Rich Aggen



***New address: Pete and Jackie Muscarella
15440 Alameda Av. Oak Forest
708-250-7949***

***Pete and Debbie Animagi
10820 W. 183rd St. Apt 325
Orland Park, IL 60467***



NOVEMBER SELECTION~ "James" by Percival Everett

James begins in the town of Hannibal, Missouri. Jim, an enslaved man, is waiting at the home of Miss Watson for a plate of cornbread to bring back to his wife, Lizzie, and daughter, Sadie. During this first scene, it becomes apparent that the enslaved people speak erudite, standard English among themselves but code-switch into dialect around their enslavers, conscious that white people view them as inferior and would be puzzled to hear them use grammatically correct English. While Jim is waiting, the young Huck Finn stops by. Although a racial divide separates the two, Jim has a soft spot for the boy, whose abusive father regularly subjects him to beatings.

Join us, Nov. 24, 7pm at the home of Connie Martin for discussion and refreshments



AS ALWAYS, WE WILL BE TAKING A BREAK IN DECEMBER. PICK A BOOK TO READ FOR PLEASURE~ SEE YOU IN 2026!

Our hearts and prayers go out to:

Family and friends of Natalie Gryga, especially the Kropacks and Carrs , on the death of their Aunt.

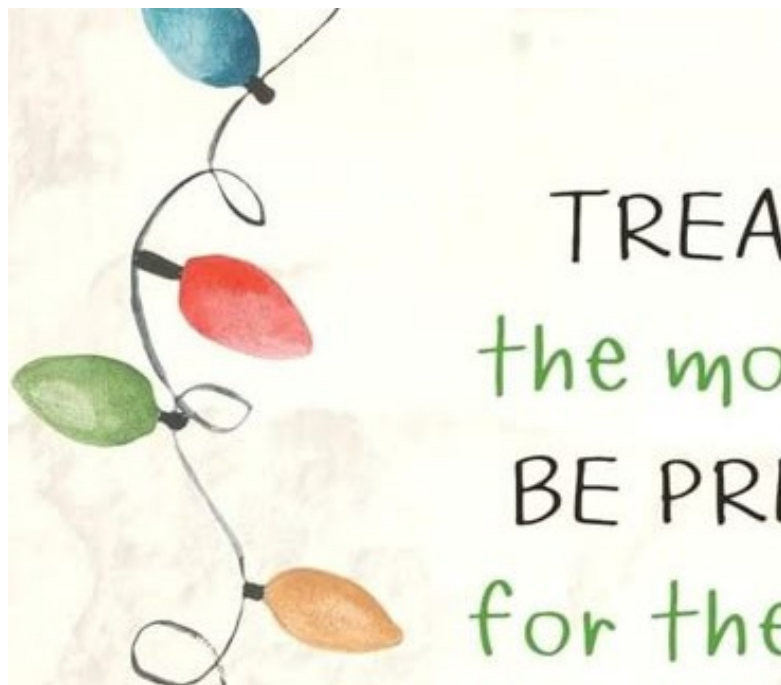
May they all be comforted by the resurrection and the life yet to come.



Please
Pray

Fern Schara, Pat Kropack, Diana Carr, Mike & Traci Stephens, Lottie White, Pete & Debbie Animagi, Gus Scott, Joanne, John, Ryder Conrad, Carole, Tom DeLeeuw, Noah Coyle, Kevin, Nick, Percy, Tommie, Steve S, Ralph, Virginia Drogula, Carol Burge, Bev, Silvia Magana, Howard Doyle, Chris McAuliff, Mike, Bob Graniczny, Kris Neumann, Kristen Richardson, Kim Wisnewski, Gary Miller, Russ; Amber, Tim Dragoon, Jim Mueller, Ralph Mueller, Sommer Trella, Jennifer J, Courtney Flynn, Blake Murphy, Scott & Brandy, Phil Peloquin, Hayley Jeralowicz, Cheryl, Matt Kuh, Joan Coyle, Greg, Dave Dau, Steve Kryl, Brett, Billy Mueller, Laura Beschowek, Wayne Kaleziak

Please inform the office for any name removals or additions. Thank you





BIRTHDAYS

1 Jerry Marquardt
 7, Mike Ellul
 8, Sten Hult
 13, Nancy Ulloa
 14, Charlotte Grossi
 19, Dominick Grossi
 24, Fern Schara

ANNIVERSARIES

3, Terry & Linda McHugh
 6, Robert & Gina Graniczny
 8, Frank & Erin Caswick
 19, Traci & Mike Stephens
 30, Bill & Deb Cummins

Moo.



NOVEMBER READERS

2 Jerry Marquardt
9 Dan Frawley
16 Deb Nowlan
23 Andrew Ogarek
30 Erica Strojny



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

2, Erin Caswick
8, Rachel DeLeeuw
11 Gary Miller
22, Art James
25 Jesus
29 Leatrice Miller

DECEMBER READERS

7 Steve Nowlan
14 Bob Hecht
21 Tony Ogarek
24 Steve Nowlan
28 Gary Rickert

