



The Church of the Redeemer
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Office of Transition Ministry Portfolio – Church of the Redeemer – Rector Search

Receiving Names until May 31, 2021

Contact

- Lee Hart
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Pittsburgh, PA 15217
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Attendance

- Sunday: 62 in two services
- Weekday: 1
- Other per Month: 0

Compensation, Housing, and Benefits

- Compensation Available for New Position: \$84,000 (Negotiable). Includes:
 - Cash Stipend - \$63,000
 - Housing - \$21,000
 - Housing: On-site Rectory with two bedrooms, a study, and two baths, available on January 1, 2022. Utilities are included.
 - Pension Plan in compliance with Church Pension Fund requirements.
 - Full SECA
 - Dental
 - Healthcare: Negotiable
 - Four weeks paid vacation including five Sundays
 - Two weeks continuing education
 - Sabbatical
 - Travel/Auto Account
 - Hospitality - \$300/year

Former Recent Rectors

- The Rev. Michael B. Foley – January 2014 - October 2020
- The Rev. Cynthia Bronson Sweigert – January 1995 – January 2011
- The Rev. Roger Ferlo – January 1987 -January 1993

Church School

- Teachers/Leaders for children: 2
- Children: 8
- Teachers/Leaders for teen/young adults: 1
- Teens/young adults: 5
- Adult School: We have a book discussion group of about 8 members. Adult education programs often occur during or after the Sunday coffee hour, with a parishioner, the rector, or an invited guest making a presentation and leading a discussion. Sometimes, we show an educational film.

Day School

- None

Describe a moment in your worshipping community's recent ministry which you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.

One of our parishioners was diagnosed with a metastasized aggressive cancer recently. Even with the current pandemic, our pastor was able to visit the hospital and conduct a virtual service of healing for her. This service allowed the community to relay its love and support to our friend, and allowed our friend to see and feel that support. We are a community that prioritizes fellowship and care; many members had already provided meals for this parishioner and/or her husband. We still come together in these unconnected, distanced times. Our church came together with our broader community after the Tree of Life shooting to hold a vigil and offer support for our Jewish neighbors. While this was a sad and disturbing time, the importance of focusing on our shared humanity rose to the top and shone.

Describe your liturgical style & practice. If your community provides more than one type of worship service, please describe all:

On Sundays we typically have two services:

Rite I Eucharistic service: The 8 a.m. service typically lasts 30-45 minutes and takes place in the Lady Chapel.

Rite II Eucharistic service: The 10:30 a.m. service is a full high choral service and lasts 75 to 90 minutes -- with choir during the school year, and with a cantor during the summer. Music comes mainly from the *1982 Episcopal Church Hymnal*, and occasionally the Lutheran *With One Voice* or the Episcopal *Lift Every Voice*, with chant, additional classical music, some more recently composed music, and occasionally instruments played by talented members of the congregation.

The rector often leads a midweek service of Compline.

The parish provides a mid-morning Wednesday service at Heritage Shadyside, a local rehab/skilled nursing facility, with a rotating team of lay leaders and clergy.

Other occasional services include Vespers, Compline, a Lessons and Carols service in Advent, a prayer service on Shrove Tuesday, and Good Friday and Blue Christmas services.

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

We openly seek volunteers for multiple functions in our services, such as lectors and intercessors, and schedule from a narrower pool where particular training may be necessary, such as altar servers. We also try to ensure that services incorporate multiple opportunities for congregational involvement, including participation in the psalms and in our judiciously expanding hymn repertoire, in which we maintain familiar tunes alongside those less familiar. We also try to craft occasions where services may be more accessible to our younger members. Much of this is helped through lay member involvement, with clergy and staff, in planning upcoming services, and through active involvement of members with our Sunday School program.

Additionally, we typically have open, or mostly open, calls for volunteers for outreach activities, including member-led services at a nearby residential health care community, and providing or serving monthly meals at the East End Cooperative Ministry shelter.

As a worshipping community, how do you care for your spiritual, emotional and physical well-being?

We try to keep informed about the health of members who we think might be ill, and if they are, some of us send them meals and/or visit when possible. We encourage people to keep in touch, especially with those living alone -- and especially during the pandemic -- and we encourage those who might be depressed to call a parish "buddy." A few of our members are intellectually or physically disabled and receive regular help from a few others. We have a prayer list consisting mostly of parishioners and their relatives and friends. Our assistant pastor, Rev. Diane Shepard, is trained as a spiritual director and participates in the weekly book group, which provides community and support for some parishioners. A centering prayer group also meets weekly.

Describe your worshipping community's involvement in either the wider Church or geographical region.

Redeemer is a founding member of two local interfaith communities, the East End Cooperative Ministry (EECM) and Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network (PIIN), groups focusing on serving the needs of the local community and acting on local and regional issues of fairness and justice.

Redeemer hosts a number of regular lay-led activities, including groups for English learners, the first Friday concert series, and lecture series in conjunction with Carnegie Mellon's continuing education program. Redeemer also hosts a semi-annual program, the Great Issues Forum, which involves conversations with expert speakers on current issues like race in Pittsburgh and affordable housing. Redeemerites participate in the annual Pittsburgh Pride celebrations, and support the Shepherd Wellness facility, a support center for individuals with HIV/AIDS and their families. Working with Jewish Family and Community Services, Redeemerites assist refugees to complete applications for green cards and citizenship.

Alcoholics Anonymous and other recovery groups, two groups of Buddhist practitioners, and the Catholic Dignity group regularly use our buildings for meetings.

How do you engage in pastoral care for those beyond your worshipping community?

Volunteer lay persons go weekly to Heritage Place, a local skilled nursing and rehab facility, to offer a prayer service or Eucharist (a priest is among them on alternate weeks) for residents and staff. Parishioners prepare and serve dinner monthly at the EECM shelter for the homeless.

Showing hospitality to the groups mentioned in the previous answer, especially AA and Dignity, is also a form of pastoral care.

Tell about a ministry that your worshipping community has initiated in the past five years. Who can be contacted about this?

One ministry initiated at Redeemer in the past five years has been the Great Issues Forum, which seeks to extend our ministry by engaging the broader community in issues of social justice and equality. Organized by a committed core group, its panels have explored police-community relations, affordable housing, education equity, immigration, gun violence, and mental health and equity. The next topic was planned to be climate change, but this has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attendance at these events regularly exceeds 50-100. Pat Edgar is the chair of its planning committee.

In August 2019, we began two weekly conversation groups for English learners, using the parish hall. Twelve Redeemerites and four other community members volunteered--usually two at a time. Attendees included graduate students from China and Hong Kong and older learners from Russia, Puerto Rico, Peru, and Italy. We shut down in March 2020 but resumed one weekly group online in May, with up to four graduate students from China and two volunteers. Contact Marianne Novy or Joan Gundersen.

These ministries, as well as the one at Heritage Place, were initiated and largely maintained by our active retired members.

How are you preparing yourselves for the Church of the future?

Redeemer has for many years focused on creating a welcoming and accepting environment for people of all backgrounds. This has created a community of faith more willing and better prepared than most to reach out and grow by empathizing with those who may have drifted away from the church but are now looking to reconnect. Additionally, one benefit of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the rapid adoption and growing comfort among the membership with digital technology and remote engagement. Prior to the pandemic, the Church's unique charm and community proved attractive enough to a number of members who live outside the traditional radius of the church - in neighborhoods such as the South and North Hills - but chose to make the journey to Squirrel Hill. The Church's growing comfort with digital technology ensures the Church is better prepared than it otherwise would have been to attract members from a larger geographic footprint and sustain engagement with members outside of physical events as it looks to grow.

What is your practice of stewardship and how does it shape the life of your worshipping community?

We define church stewardship as using wisely the resources that God has given us to best serve Him and all His creation. This includes ensuring the health of the physical church property, the financial health of the church, and the spiritual and intellectual health and wellbeing of the church community.

Church of the Redeemer has a yearly stewardship campaign to allow parishioners to pledge their time, talent, and/or treasure. This allows the finance committee to budget for the coming year and for us to acknowledge that all members have something to contribute to the life of the church. During the Fall pledge period, several members of the congregation give short presentations during the Sunday service describing how their experience at Church of the Redeemer has influenced their lives. The Stewardship Committee has produced mailings and reading materials, and arranged special events like "cottage meetings" and a sit-down luncheon after the church service on Commitment Sunday.

We also work for environmental stewardship, using ceramic cups and saucers at coffee hours instead of single-use plastic. Part of our property has been certified as a wildlife sanctuary.

What is your worshipping community's experience of conflict? And how have you addressed it?

The community of Church of the Redeemer experienced a period of great conflict in the mid-1990s when the bishop of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, Robert Duncan, precipitated a split in the Episcopal Church in the United States. Our rector actively engaged in attempts to reconcile the two factions, but those attempts ultimately were not successful. Our parish was the first in the nation to vote against leaving the Episcopal church; the decision was the result of a unanimous vote at Church of the Redeemer's annual meeting in January 2004.

There was also a period of conflict later when, following a three-month leave of absence for discernment, our rector and the parish began a period of transition that ended her parish duties in 2011. Many felt that depletion of her energy through her efforts during the crisis had affected her ministry. The transition was not easy and resulted in some members leaving Church of the Redeemer. One takeaway is that the rector should have a regular sabbatical leave; this is in the contract we offer.

What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?

Dealing with lower membership, parishioners have increased contributions of time and treasure, and we have been able to maintain a balanced budget, continued programming, and church maintenance including renovation of the stained glass.

The coronavirus pandemic has transformed the functioning of our community, with many active members over 65. In mid-March 2020, we suddenly had to stop having services and community meetings in our church. Our programming has moved entirely online, with the help of a hardworking technology team. The Sunday service is live streamed and includes music from our choir, organists, and soloists. Approximately half our membership and some external listeners join every Sunday. Our midweek services, choir practice, book group, and English classes and vestry meeting have also moved online. The congregation was polled and did not feel safe returning to in-church service. Our priests have become creative and used nice weather for a few outdoor services and developed a process for parishioners to receive communion. We have learned from these months that we can have the resources and persistence to overcome challenges.

Please provide words describing the gifts and skills essential to the future leaders of your worshipping community.

- Dynamic preaching
- Pastoral care
- Social justice
- Membership expansion

Connections

Online Presence:

- Website: <https://redeempittsburgh.org/>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RedeemerChurchPgh>
- YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3_jLUFGxblm5ktTCokPh_w

Languages

Worship and classes are provided in English – Many of our parishioners are fluent in languages from across the globe. We conduct an English language speaking program.

Strategic Plan

Church of the Redeemer has no Strategic Plan at present; we are hoping that the new rector will play an integral part in helping the church develop and implement one.

References

Wardens

- Senior Warden – Lou Camerlengo
- Previous Senior Warden – Lorrie Esch

Search Chair Names:

- Lee Hart
- Marianne Novy
- Email - RedeemerSearch5700@gmail.com

Parish/Institution Leader Name:

- The Rev. Catherine Munz

Local Community Leader Name

- Dan Gilman - Chief of Staff, Pittsburgh Mayor's Office Local Community Leader
412-255-2626 - Daniel.Gilman@pittsburghpa.gov