

Transformed BY LOVE



Table of Contents

02

ANNUAL ADDRESS

The Rev. Philip DeVaul

04

PARISH LIFE IN THE PEOPLE'S CHURCH

Liz Coley

07

ON BEING CALLED

The Rev. Dr. Herschel Wade

11

I BELIEVE: A FAITHFUL JOURNEY

John Calhoun

15

TRUSTING THE WORDS OF JESUS

Tym House

17

THE PARTNERSHIPS OF PASTORAL CARE

Carol Sanger

20

2025 LIST OF NOMINEES

26

2024 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES



From the Rector

As we settle into 2025, I want to say two things that are true about the church. I don't just mean the Church of the Redeemer, rather I mean the Christian Church as a messy, mystical body as it exists in the world. I want to focus on two of the things that are true about the Church, and then I want to share with you how I believe these two things, sitting alongside each other, are going to affect us as Church of the Redeemer in 2025.

The first thing that is true about the Church is something that some old bishop said. Archbishop William Temple, to be exact, who has a window in our sanctuary, once said, "The Church is the only institution that exists primarily for the benefit of those who are not its members." That is to say, the Church's primary function is not to make the lives of its members better: The Church's primary function is to equip its members so that they make the world around them a better place.

Another bishop, our recently retired Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, has been known to ask a question in the same vein: "If your church shut its doors tomorrow, who besides the membership would notice it was gone?" Looking at our church through this lens shifts us out of the mindset of asking, "What does my church do for me?" or "What do I get out of my church?"

The Church exists for the purpose of making life better for people who aren't part of it. What a beautiful reason to exist!

Here is the second thing that is true about the Church, and it comes from a model of congregational development that is taught in the College for Congregational Development. (The College is a ministry that is growing in The Episcopal Church, and a new branch will be launching in the Diocese of Southern Ohio this year.) The very first thing they teach is a model called "Gather-Transform-Send". This model asserts that the primary purpose of a church is to gather those who are called to be part of the Church into a community, to transform the gathered in mind, heart, and action, and then to send the transformed people out into the world to be and act as God's loving, transforming presence in the world.

Ok, granted that second truth is more complex and wordy than the first one, but it's worth it. It's saying the Church exists to gather a certain group of people together, transform them with Christ's love, and send them back out into the big wide world.

If you are just doing a surface read of these two truths, they might at first seem as if they are contradicting each other. The first one says that the Church exists for the benefit of its non-members, the second saying the Church exists for the transformation of its members. And there is a tension there. It's a tension that I believe exists in all congregations – the pull between the internal and the external work. The movement inward and the movement outward.

Some people believe that tension is inherently harmful. It was our current Senior Warden, Beth Weinewuth who helped articulate for me how that is not always the case. You see, Beth knows how to dance. And during a Vestry gathering, she once pointed out that in ballroom dancing, it is impossible for two people to dance with each other without tension. For partners to move in grace and harmony they must push against each other. Not to fight, but for the sake of balance. They might know all the moves, they might have rhythm, but they need the tension to dance.

So it is with the Church. We embrace the tension that exists between the inward work and the outward work. There is balance in it. There is intention and care. There is a responsibility to pay attention, to forgive a misstep, to keep at it. This is the dance.

If you look closely at the language of Gather-Transform-Send, you will notice that the goal is to transform church members so that they are helping to transform the world outside the Church for love.

In other words, there is no contradiction. We exist for the benefit of our non-members. And part of how we benefit our non-members is by transforming the lives of our members: We make sure that the transformation is one that turns the hearts of our congregation outward, that opens our eyes and hearts to the world around us, and then gives us the courage to love this world the way God loves it – with a generous, sacrificial love.

How does that affect Church of the Redeemer in the Year of our Lord 2025?

I believe the Holy Spirit is inviting us into some deep and intentional discernment about how we form the members of our community for service to and in the world. The ministries that we call our Mission or Outreach ministries are in a time of transition, and this transition will take the attention and care of our whole church in order for us to understand where God is leading us.

How Church of the Redeemer engages with the world around us is meant to be at the heart of our identity as Church. This does not mean in any way that we neglect the ministry of caring for each other, of relationship-building, of helping people feel their belonging. That work is essential. Our goal is to understand how the love that we share within our congregation equips us to better share love outside our congregation. This is the healthy tension. It's not a competition, it's a dance.

To that end, I am calling for a parish wide revisioning of our mission work. Anny Stevens-Gleason in her new role as Minister for Congregational Development, alongside Assisting Priest Joyce Keeshin, and Minister for Mission and Family Discipleship Tym House will lead us all in a process of discernment that will include all members of Church of the Redeemer. Our plan is for us to get a deeper understanding of our existing outreach ministries, our Mission Board, our Mission Funding Committee, our various local mission partners (like Found House IHN, MEAC, and ERS), our flourishing relationship with Clark Montessori High School, our growing connection to St. Andrew's, and our continuing commitment to the Becoming Beloved Community initiative.

We want to better understand how all these things connect, how they don't, where things are being born, where they are dying, where we have been, and where we are going. We want to develop a consensus on the next chapter of Church of the Redeemer's life in the world around us. My hope is that in the year 2025, each of you will be able to see yourself in the work to come, for you to see how you are partnering with God in the love that transforms you and transforms your community.

Your friend and brother in Christ Jesus,





Parish Life in the People's Church

BY LIZ COLEY

Remember the finger game we played as kids: "Here's the church and here's the steeple; open the door and here are the people!" It was always more surprising than it should have been. We, the church's people, were there every time, waiting to be revealed. We've been told this time and again. Our Associate Priest for Discipleship, the Rev. Dr. Herschel Wade reminded us in Adult Forum that the Church isn't a building—it's a composition of humans woven together in relationship by belief and aspirations and acts of love. *The people are the church.* And in our Rector's podcast "What I Learned in 2024", Philip poignantly reflected that the beat went on at the corner of Paxton and Erie, through

all of us, even as he took his restorative sabbatical. In the absence of the Rector, we truly appreciated that *the Church is the people's*.

Church of the Redeemer's self-reflective story is that years ago, when money was raised for "us" for the renovation of our sanctuary, half of the new funds were directed to construction, the other half to mission outreach. This was the plan, we told ourselves: half of our hearts to meet God at church and in each other, half of our hearts to meet God in the world. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." The intent was to recognize that life as members of the church has a moral directive and includes our actions in the greater world—the larger us. Putting the question of money well aside and focusing only on our generosity of heart and time, have we found that balance yet, or do we still have much room to grow into our aspirations?

At the final working Vestry meeting of 2024, we began a discussion around identity and purpose that will continue and spread more widely through Church of the Redeemer in the coming year. How well do we know ourselves? Who do we think we are? Who do we say we are? How do we show it? How do we share it? In that single meeting, we touched only the tip of the iceberg, but this point was made clear—we believe that collectively we "do church" well:

At Sunday morning 9 a.m. services, from my spot among a choir of 23 (plus 8 bell ringers, 13 young musicians, 8 Banquet musicians, and up to 11 Celtic musicians), I see and appreciate the orchestrated volunteer efforts of 16 bread bakers, 20 flower guild members, 16 altar guild members, 30 ushers, 10 sacristans, 12 lay readers/lectors, 20 intercessors, 10 acolytes, and 2 AV techs.

Each section of the ensemble plays a part contributing to the harmony of our worship together. It's a vast collaboration we perform for and with each other to worship at different times and in different formats throughout the week. Around this liturgical time, we join and support each other in caretaking, in grief, in Stephen Ministry, in book group, in education, in Bible study, in youth groups, in young adulting, in living our Second Half, even in knitting. Our parish life is rich and vibrant and multifaceted—look at the events calendar and weekly eblast if you doubt it. So many moving parts! But is it all about "us"?

One of the prayers that concludes our Rite II Eucharist includes these words, "Send us now into the world to do the work you have given us to do." How time-generous are we when it comes to meeting God among the larger us? Where do we touch the world with our hands and hearts?

The obvious place to look is organized outreach ministries coordinated under the Mission Board. Our innovative CoR After School program watches over and feeds an average of 55 students daily within our walls while 10 parishioners volunteer as companions and tutors. Other formal outreach ministries focus on partnerships; our volunteers boost the work of social services in our community, and the Mission Funding Committee provides some financial support. First Step Home ministry (10 volunteers) brings quarterly suppers to women in recovery; Madison Villa ministry (2) brings quarterly birthday celebrations to the senior residents of this affordable housing complex; People Working Cooperatively (PWC) ministry (17) combines with other PWC teams to build access ramps and do home repairs. Recently restarted, 18-20 volunteers join forces with the Freestore Foodbank monthly to pack weekend supplies for food security. The Interfaith Hospitality Network/Found House ministry has recently evolved into a partnership in which Church of the Redeemer volunteers take shifts at Knox Presbyterian where families find emergency overnight housing. Our revamped MEAC ministry partnership includes the Mini-MEAC closet monthly collection of goods for the MEAC pantry, delivered by volunteer Closet Couriers (5). These are the formal relationships we currently sustain as a congregation with the community. The numbers aren't huge, but formal partnerships don't represent the complete inventory.



Looking closer, I see another level of acts of love bursting out of the walls: Prayer Shawls and Prayer Bears from the Knittin' Kittens are taken out into the community to enwrap the women at First Step home; parishioners gather to carol at Madison Villa, ERS Retirement facilities, and First Step Home; Creation Care Team (16) hosts a recycling and swap affair for the entire neighborhood, along with a table offering soup and free bread baked by the Communion bread team; CoR After School students make tiny ornaments to add to the Christmas gift bags for Madison Villa; the adult choir joins in evening worship and free concerts with both Episcopal and non-Episcopal churches; the Flower Guild sends arrangements to the sick or shut in; our communications ministry curates and posts sermons, blogs, podcasts, and worship services on the internet to create greater possibilities for connection.

Still, there are more acts I can only imagine which add to the growing inventory of our deeds--the parishioners who express generosity of spirit and time in leading scout troops, fostering children and animals, serving as volunteer advocates in the courts, providing pro bono legal and medical care, and individually pursuing justice, equity and

peace. Church of the Redeemer is a parish of around 450 families. How much can we ask ourselves to do? What is a reasonable aim? The identity question we need to unpack is: are we a thousand points of light or a focused beacon or can we be both?

In a final twist of the hands, harder now with older and less flexible fingers, the people become the stairs the cleric ascends, and finally interlock into a pulpit from which the cleric offers their prayers. We are the stepping stones, the vessel, and the fingers by which the hard and rewarding work of love is done.



On Being Called



BY THE REV. DR. HERSCHEL WADE

It was fifteen months ago when I received a text message from Phil DeVaul. “I got your phone number from someone. I would like to talk with you about possibly working together.” We spoke the next day. Phil cut right to the chase, “I’ve got this great congregation, and I believe something exciting is happening here. We’re right at the edge of a transformation. However, to become the church called by the Holy Spirit, the Church of the Redeemer needs a leader of color.” I was intrigued, but this was unexpected. After we said good-bye, I heard a voice say, “I think this is what a call feels like.” A week later, Phil picked me up from the airport. That weekend, I attended a church grounded in Christ and on the move. The congregation was utterly alive. Also, the people looked well-fed—by worship and each other. Before my trip ended, I decided I could eat there too.

As the Associate Priest for Discipleship a year later, I can boldly say, “This is what call feels like.” I have spent the past year observing, learning, and relationship-building within this worshiping community. What have I learned thus far? First, I see a community that strives to be what it believes. Secondly, I see a church unified in a vision to continue deepening its relationship with Christ while discarding all elements not rooted in love. These attributes yield a community where all are welcomed, seen, and affirmed—one grounded in hope and prayer and

molded and shaped into a priesthood of faithful believers. At Church of the Redeemer, I have learned what it means to journey in faith within a community, assisted by the Word of God, promises of God, and works of God done through Jesus Christ. Importantly, Church of the Redeemer members read the Bible, sing, worship, pray, eat, and gather as a community both in fellowship and to serve others. What I like most about Church of the Redeemer is that the community members are all-in when it comes to supporting the church and each other.

I believe that my call to this church is not isolated to just me. Calls never are. The Church of the Redeemer's call is very much entangled with mine. If you have been called to be a part of Church of the Redeemer, you are also called upon. So, what might this call from God be about? Like my call, Church of the Redeemer's call is essentially one of discipleship.

As stated earlier, I have been called to serve as the Associate Priest for Discipleship. So, why become a disciple, and why form disciples? The short, easy answer: Jesus commanded it. An in-depth answer: Discipleship moves believers towards the rule and kingship of Christ. It shapes the Christian person and life in preparation for the Kingdom of God. It is a journey towards a deeper relationship with Jesus. One learns from Jesus, becomes more like Him, commits life to Jesus' mission, and invites and guides others onto the path to become Christ-like.

What form or forms does discipleship take at Church of the Redeemer? First, we strive to make our church a model disciple as a single entity. Furthermore, from what I observe, Church of the Redeemer prioritizes discipleship as a target goal of nearly all our community offerings,



including services of worship, group prayer, Bible study (Wednesday and Thursday), support/fellowship groups, communal dinners and celebrations, and all Church of the Redeemer (in-church and outreach) ministries. Lastly, our education ministry assumes a significant role in discipleship.

How does Christian education translate to effective discipleship and disciple-making? Such a question is relevant, particularly for traditional classroom approaches that engage the senses minimally and disregard the power and experiential engagement that foster personal connections, problem-solving abilities, and self-awareness. However, educational practices at Church of the Redeemer are community and conversation-centered, enabling connections of ideas and concepts to personal experiences through storytelling and faith-sharing narratives, all of which contribute powerfully to Christian discipleship and disciple-making.

Importantly, commitment to Jesus' mission of reconciliation, healing of death-dealing systems and structures, and bearing witness to the life-giving truths of the good news of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God are at the heart of being a Christian and a disciple of Christ. As such, our educational offerings resist imparting knowledge simply for conversation and information regurgitation. Instead, I envision Church of the Redeemer children and adult offerings aiming resolutely at Christian formation and discipleship—transforming ways of living, believing, and being. By being tapped inextricably into the spiritual life and movement of the congregation, Church of the Redeemer education will strive to be a valuable conversation partner for the

community as individuals and the collective community of all ages discern what God is continually calling us to do. Our Rector invited me to join Church of the Redeemer on a journey of transformation. I was thrilled to accept such a challenge. After my arrival, it was clear that he was right and was already preparing the community for the future. The church's programmatic themes for the 2023-24, 2024-25, and 2025-26 years were telling. Indeed, Nourished by Love, Transformed by Love, and Pilgrimage with God's Love underlie a vision of a God-guided transformation in progress. Our educational content supports this vision because it is powerful and valuable. During the 2025-2026 program year, we move on to pilgrimage.

I see several opportunities for pilgrimage in the Church of the Redeemer community. The first involves our partnership with St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. We initiated this endeavor through two educational programs: as part of our Becoming Beloved Community initiative and the Sacred Ground series. However, we have yet to fully invest ourselves in this work. I can say that our lack of investment has nothing to do with deeply rooted resistance to transformation. I am also confident that racial biases or disinterest in racial reconciliation are not behind our slow movement forward. Instead, I believe that the Church of the Redeemer community might be held back by multiple fears—fear of offending others, fear of not knowing what to say, fear of being rejected, fear of being triggered by feelings of guilt and shame, or even fear of the unknown. All of these fears are reasonable concerns. However, remember that Jesus will be with one of us on such a meaningful journey—one that could change our lives forever.

Secondly, we've already taken several necessary steps. We have already committed to forming a partnership and have begun living into that promise by planning and participating in several events that brought together Church of the Redeemer's and St. Andrew's communities. It is time to follow up on our promises. It is time to take all the risks accompanying an endeavor to bring much-needed change and promise significant, life-changing rewards. As the offender, Church of the Redeemer is not guaranteed, nor should it expect rewards. The gains come from knowing the relationship has been made right.

Whatever we decide to pursue with St. Andrews, it is essential to remember that our efforts will benefit both communities and beyond.

Another pilgrimage opportunity includes a trip to the US-Mexico border wall in Arizona. The Cruzando Fronteras (CF) ministry is committed to proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and action. It calls us to faithfully engage the unfolding moment at the Arizona-Mexico border and Church of the Redeemer.

The pilgrimage to the borderlands includes a geographical space that has existed as a migration pathway for many seeking safety and hope for a new future. It also includes God's call to love, accompany, and pray for our migrating siblings. Importantly, it calls for and promises mutual growth from opportunities for story-sharing, relationship-building, and liberation from being a part of the problem.

We are planning a trip to the Arizona borderlands sometime in 2026. Taking the pilgrimage will require preparatory training in the fall of 2025. The training will focus on engaging in bilateral partnerships that resist the zero-sum perspective and assumptions of wealth, power, and life circumstances. Such partnerships offer a foretaste of the Kingdom of God, liberating individuals from the heavy burden of unearned privilege by empowering those who have suffered due to the unequal sharing of God's riches. Finally, it is important to state an often-overlooked fact. The fact is this: true liberation requires that all are liberated. We are all held captive by systems and structures that oppress populations while offering gains to others. Whereas the specifics of captivity differ between those who have and those who are bound, the reality is that everyone suffers.

When we are baptized, we are also adopted by God through Jesus Christ. We become disciples of Christ. We make vows to participate in Jesus' mission of reconciliation. We renounce the destructive forces of evil that counter God's will and dream for all things created. This renouncement of Satan and destructive evil forces makes us mortal enemies of all agents and works of darkness, which means that we will vow not to function as vessels for, contribute to, and even stand in agreement with such forces. The confessions we make with our lips when we recite the Baptismal Covenant say that we stand with Jesus in the fight against the forces of evil that wreak havoc in human lives. Most importantly, we promise to value the lives of others, even strangers.

Friends, we worship God and follow Jesus, not solely because of the benefits of doing both. We do it because we love a God who created us simply to love us. We do it because our dreams for God's creation cannot be very different from the dreams of the One responsible for the very being of the universe.

My final words concern adult education. It is my hope that this important ministry will touch and be touched by the lives of all our members. Whereas it may appear that our educational efforts are a stand-alone operation, the truth is that they are attached and integrated with all church ministries. It is through the forums that we converse with theologians, the church, marginalized groups, organizations that support vulnerable populations, lay leaders, teachers, fellow parishioners, and others, all of which have stories and information to share, invitations to extend, and calls from God to pass on to us. Whatever information is being conveyed, please know that you will find something to feed your soul, to direct you as a disciple, to remind you of the love of God, and to remind you that all our lives are connected to each other and to the One that cares for us with a love that surpasses human understanding.

Congratulations on another year of your journey with Christ through The Episcopal Church of the Redeemer. Whatever you have given or brought to our community is enough. If you feel a tug or pull on your heart to dive in deeper, please do so because it is your call from God waiting to be answered.



today in the United States of America, one of the wealthiest countries in the world, 40% of our people are poor or one bad event from being shoved into poverty

I've joined others in our church many times to lead Lenten and Adult Forum series on topics of justice. We were often faced with the question, "so what do we do now?" We weren't always prepared with an answer. I've been on my own journey to answer this question and I share it with you here in hopes of encouraging your own faithful journey.

I believe in an abundant God. I believe in a God that created and provided for all in the Garden (Genesis 1-2). I believe in a God that feeds the hungry in the desert (Exodus 16, John 6) and heals our physical being. I believe in an abundant God that instructs the Israelites to let the land rest every 7 years and to instead live off what grows wildly and what's been stored (Leviticus 25).

I Believe: A Faithful Journey

BY JOHN CALHOUN



And yet, today in the United States of America, one of the wealthiest countries in the world, 40% of our people are poor or one bad event away from being shoved into poverty. Additionally, our country had a revolutionary movement in the 60s, the Civil Rights Movement, which brought about real change to how we govern, and yet, the racial wealth gap is still here and has grown. In a country where many profess Jesus as Christ, how can all of this be?

A little before Jesus is arrested, he's gathered with his friends, preparing. One of his comrades, a woman, takes an expensive jar of perfume, cracks the jar open, and anoints her friend and leader (John 12:1-8). I think she saw what the male disciples didn't see; that the religious institution and authoritative state were about to come down hard on their movement and try to put an end to it. She saw that Jesus was about to be executed. Instead of seeing the same, however, Judas makes an empty claim about charity to the poor. But Jesus already knew his corruption and greed. Jesus replies to Judas, "You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me." I grew up perplexed with this statement by Jesus. It was explained to me with a defeated attitude toward poverty that some folks are just going to be poor. That's the way it is, and their poverty is likely their own fault. I accepted it, but it didn't really fit with the Jesus I was reading about.

In adulthood, the Poor People's Campaign enlightened me to a truth about Jesus' response. Like many other times, Jesus is referencing the scriptures. In Deuteronomy 15:1-11, the Lord tells the people, "But there will be no poor among you ... if only you will strictly obey the voice of the Lord your God." So, what is commanded of us? To love God and our neighbor as our self (Matthew 22:37-39); to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly (Micah 6:8); to make sure the marginalized in our society are prioritized (Deuteronomy 10:17-20); [WU1] to give away our wealth (Mark 10:17-32). I believe God gives us a collective responsibility to each other to live out love for peace and justice.

I also believe that with an abundant God that provides for our basic needs, that housing is a right. And as human made pollution is driving an increased frequency of deadly extreme weather events, now more than ever, we need to guarantee housing for all. In 2021, I learned there was a ballot initiative to fund affordable housing where the need is.



Our church had said affordable housing was of great importance, and I'd learned we lacked tens of thousands of homes affordable to those at very low incomes, so I volunteered for this campaign.

Cincinnati Action for Housing Now (CAHN) had put forth a Charter Amendment that would call on city to redistribute the budget so that more funds would go to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund,

with priority to where the need is and where the “market” doesn’t supply housing. The commodification of housing for an investment focused economy has so greatly increased the costs that the “market” is unable to provide housing affordable to low-income people. So, we as a people need to take care of it, and as a Christian, I believe we have a God given responsibility to do so.

Although the campaign in 2021 and an additional one in 2023 failed to pass, CAHN, along with the Greater Cincinnati Homeless Coalition and Communities United for Action (CUFA), are still working to bring about Truly Affordable Housing for All. I’m now an active member of their organizing committee and we’re focused on building power with the people.

I also believe in a God that flips the table on our economic constructs, like Jesus flipped the tables of the money lenders (John 2:13-16). I believe in a God that calls out policy that makes people poor (Isaiah 10) and calls out the selfish and vain philanthropy of those who take homes (Luke 20:45-47). I also believe in a God who convinced a greedy tax collector to make reparations (Luke 19:1-10) and instructed the Israelites to redistribute the manna collected based on need (Exodus 16:15-17), and to be good stewards of resources so there could be Jubilee (Leviticus 25:3-4). And of course, I believe in a God that led a movement that convinced the first Christians to share everything (Acts 4:32-34).

The passage in Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 15:1-11) nearly ends with, “there will always be poor people in the land”. I have learned this is said not as a judgment against the moral fortitude of people in poverty, but as a judgment against the people as a whole, whose institutions are corruptible. Just as Jesus knew Judas was corrupted by greed, so God knows how easily greed corrupts us all. So where is today’s greed? I see it in having the largest military spending in the world and tax cuts for the wealthy that don’t need it while 40% of our people are poor or low-income. I see it in the criminalization of people experiencing homelessness, placing “protection” of property over the dignity of people. And in our own city, I saw it in the large sums of money spent by corporate leaders to oppose CAHN’s campaigns, and our government giving public subsidies to for-profit developers for market-rate housing and stadiums without equity for the people.

I am convicted, filled with the spirit to act for justice and equity, moving in hope and faith for a Kingdom Come. And I am dissatisfied with our current state. What can we do? Tithe and give generously? Of course, we should. When someone, or a mission partner, asks for funds, we should help them (Matthew 25). But I believe we’re called to do more. We need to move beyond our status quo philanthropy and band-aid solutions. We need to go upstream and tackle the evils of greed and self-centrism that create injustice. But again, how?

While I don’t believe there’s just one way to join Christ in bringing about the Kingdom, I do now feel confident in making at least one recommendation: join an organization focused on racial and economic justice, particularly one acting locally and with an eye toward policy. There are many out there and I know it can be difficult to narrow down and figure out which ones hit your heart the hardest. I started this journey in 2017 and finally, I feel I’ve found my place, even if only for a time. Start small, joining an organization’s newsletter mailing list and then eventually meeting their calls to action. And if you’ve already found that justice focused organization, fantastic and keep persisting. You’ll never know where this will take you. I certainly didn’t. Just like following Christ, it takes faith and commitment, and we need to do it together. Our individual actions may not seem like much, but when added together as part of a collective, I believe that’s how we bend the arc.

I also am encouraged by our church’s collective journey. As you have read elsewhere in this publication, Church of the Redeemer’s journey continues in 2025 with a period of discernment as evidenced by Phil’s introduction piece when he says, “the Holy Spirit is inviting us into some deep and intentional discernment about how we form the members of our community for service to and in the world.” We will learn more about ourselves, our community and our God in this journey. What we learn may dissatisfy us, but I pray it convicts us. And then we may find ourselves answering the question Liz Coley asks in her piece, “are we a thousand points of light or a focused beacon or can we be both?”





Trusting the Words of Jesus

BY TYM HOUSE

“The early church was marked as a people on mission—declaring and demonstrating the gospel anywhere they went. One of the key indicators of biblical community is that the group doesn’t exist primarily or predominantly for the good of the insider. Many youth groups cater to the regular students—we want to keep them happy and engaged. But a group on mission is always thinking beyond the walls of the church.” - Good Kids, Big Events, & Matching T-shirts, by: David Hertweck & Doug Fields

Mission is a powerful word, loaded with meaning depending on the context. For the church, mission isn’t about grand gestures or measured results—it’s about embodying the radical love of Christ. It’s about stepping into the lives of others with no expectation of return. No praise. No reciprocation. Just love. Mission calls us to meet people where they are, not to fix them or mold them into something else, but to simply walk alongside them, demonstrating the unapologetic, unconditional love that Jesus modeled.

Jesus reminded his disciples that the world would know we are his followers by our love for one another (John 13:35). That’s the heart of mission. Any outcomes—healing, growth, or transformation—aren’t the goal. They’re the beautiful byproducts of love lived out authentically. This kind of mission is evident in our after-school program—a ministry that radiates this ethos of unapologetic love.

Through our partnership with Clark Montessori, we’ve opened our doors to 7th–12th grade students in our community. Now in our fourth year of CoR After School, we’ve welcomed 231 unique students this school year alone—about 33% of Clark’s enrolled student body. These students come to gather, relax, and participate in various activities. We provide a safe space where they can be themselves—whether playing video games, enjoying a snack, or exploring new skills like cooking, art, or yoga.

This grassroots ministry is shaped by the students’ needs and desires. We’ve tried ideas that didn’t work, adjusted, and kept moving forward. Our goal isn’t to make them conform but to love them exactly as they are—on their good days and their hard ones. Even when they’re chaotic. Even when they’re upset or unsure. We’re here for them every single day, no exceptions.

I won’t sugarcoat it—this kind of ministry is hard. Some days it feels like the work goes unnoticed. Some days we wonder if it’s making a difference. But that’s the beauty of mission. It’s not about what we gain but about being faithful to love as Jesus loves. And in those moments, the love we pour out has a way of flowing back to us. Like breaking up a fight but also witnessing a group of students joyfully learning how to cook. Or reminding a kid (yet again!) to keep their hands to themselves, only to see others showing up weekly for youth group, growing in ways we never expected.



This is what happens when we trust the words of Jesus. When we love without limits or conditions, the Holy Spirit moves, creating space for transformation and connection. We don’t have to force it. We just show up, love boldly, and let God do the rest. The results? They’re nothing short of miraculous. Every day, we’re reminded that love—pure, selfless, Christ-like love—is the mission. And that’s enough.



The Partnerships of Pastoral Care

BY CAROL SANGER



Partnering can take many forms, but almost always it includes providing support and lending an ear or a helping hand when it's needed most. Nothing comes closer to that definition in Church of the Redeemer's Christian community than does its Stephen Ministry program.

Stephen Ministers are sometimes called "the after people," lay parishioners who are trained to walk alongside people after a crisis -- after a funeral, the loss of a job, a cancer diagnosis or other life trauma. It is during these "after periods" in life that many people may struggle alone, either emotionally or physically. It is then when Stephen Ministry can be especially valuable, forging confidential partnerships of prayerful comfort and support to individuals most in need, whom we call Care Receivers.

Stephen Ministry trains, organizes, and supports lay people to provide confidential one-to-one Christian care to hurting people in and around a congregation. Thousands of congregations across the county use Stephen Ministry because all share two common characteristics: There are more individuals who would benefit from one-on-one Christ-centered care, far more than pastors alone can care for; and there are lay people with the gifts and potential to provide care once trained and empowered to do so.

Since the Stephen Ministry program was launched at Church of the Redeemer in 2018, a total of 26 Stephen Ministers have been trained and commissioned, serving nearly 40 parishioners with individualized, one-on-one Christ-centered care. Several of these relationships have lasted three or more years, evidence of the close bonds that are formed through this program.

Church of the Redeemer is blessed with one of the largest and strongest Stephen Ministry programs in Cincinnati, due to the support provided from our clergy and the interest in participating demonstrated by our parishioners, either as Stephen Ministers or as Care Receivers. All are necessary components of a meaningful, successful ministry.

Many aspects of our program's success are derived from our partnership with over 20 churches of the Greater Cincinnati Stephen

Ministry Network. Each quarter, members of this network gather and collaborate to support one another through exchanging best practices, valuable continuing education opportunities, troubleshooting challenges, and offering Stephen Ministry care when another church is unable to do so. Within this city-wide community, Church of the Redeemer forged a unique and fruitful bilateral partnership with the Catholic Crescent Parishes. By working together for our trainings, continuing education, and social events, both churches have grown and deepened the roots of their respective ministries towards our common goal of providing Christ-centered care. We celebrate that our dear friends at the Crescent Parishes will commission 3 Stephen Ministers who have trained alongside Church of the Redeemer's 6 trainees for their 20-week and 50-hour training course. Many dinners, heartfelt conversations, prayers, spiritual growth, laughs, and God-moments have been shared, and we look forward to continuing to support, empower, and love one another as we live into the work as Stephen Ministers, hand in hand.

Bilateral partnering is common in Church of the Redeemer's pastoral ministries. Over the past several years, Church of the Redeemer's Pastoral Care team recognized the importance and need for easy access to quality grief support. In early 2024, Church of the Redeemer received an invitation to partner with the Goldstein Family Grief Center at Hospice of Cincinnati. This partnership included events focusing on the universality and importance of grief. Participants were able to share their grief experiences, honor and remember their loved one, discuss feelings and emotions associated with grief, explore challenges like stress management, reduce "brain chatter", and acknowledge changes in roles and self-esteem. The caring relationships formed, and the work shared in this small group were healing and life-giving for everyone involved.

As Andrea Rogers, a Grief Support Group participant commented: *I am not a crier, so the faces of grief were/are hard for me to recognize. The group validated all of the ways that grief shows up and reminded me that grief is not linear. ... the group gave me support and a new language in which to hold my grief—instead of 'moving on', I am learning to 'live on' with God's grace and Redeemer's support.*

One of the quietest and most deeply supportive pastoral offerings at Church of the Redeemer is our Caregiver Support Group which began online in May 2021. This group is comprised of people whose spouses are living with cognitive decline related to various types of dementia. This small group has been greatly enriched by our partnership with the Center for Memory Support & Inclusion at Episcopal Retirement Services, led by Director Shannon Braun, LISW-S. Shannon's depth of wisdom and experience from many years of working with families and their loved ones living with dementia has exponentially enriched not only the quality of our Caregiver Support Group, but also the lives of many additional parishioners she has met with over the years.

Shannon Braun shared how honored she was to co-facilitate the Caregiver Support Group at Redeemer. "The group brings honesty and vulnerability in their sharing and support for one another," Shannon said. She emphasized how heartened she is when churches seek to educate their congregations in order to be more informed and supportive.

Through these partnerships, Church of the Redeemer's pastoral ministries have been not only walking alongside others in our community, but also partnering with God in the love that transforms us and transforms our community.



The Caregiver Support Group at Redeemer brings honesty and vulnerability in their sharing and support for one another. Faith communities can be vital lifelines during the long and isolating dementia and caregiving journey. ...Church of the Redeemer has blown me away. The church links arms with their parishioners and shows up in both direct and indirect ways. The support group is a true example of a loving community, nurtured by people who seek connection and understanding. What a gift to those impacted by dementia when they need it most.

2025 Vestry Nominees



MARK KROEGER

Nominee for Vestry 2025-2028

Mark Kroeger, and his wife Barbara Stephens, have been attending Church of the Redeemer since 2018 when they returned to Cincinnati after living nearly 10 years in Knoxville, Tenn. While in Knoxville, they were active members of the Episcopal Church of the Ascension At Church of the Redeemer, Mark has continued his service as a Stephen Minister and a Stephen Ministry leader that began during his time at Ascension. Mark also has been active in our Second Half of Life group as a member of the planning team

and has served on the Church of the Redeemer annual giving team as well. Mark and Barb have five children between them and seven grandchildren. Mark is a former newspaper journalist who transitioned to corporate communications roles during his career in the media industry. He enjoys reading presidential biographies, dabbles at piano, golfs, cycles, and is an automotive enthusiast. "My faith in God is central to my being. I consider it an act of love and devotion to serve when called upon to do so."

KATY MALLON

Nominee for Vestry 2025-2028

Katy has been a parishioner at Church of the Redeemer since the fall of 2014 and was confirmed in May of 2015. She served with Godly Play and Cookie Guild for 3-4 years until 2020. Katy then joined the Altar Guild about five years ago and continues to serve in that ministry today.

Katy has been married to Danny for 17 years. They have three children, Owen (12), Cara (10) and Jay (7). Katy is a Physical Therapist and for the last nine years



has been employed part-time at Cincinnati Therapeutic Riding & Horsemanship, where she provides equine-assisted therapy. In her spare time she enjoys yoga, tennis and being outdoors.

Over the ten years that Katy and her family have been parishioners at Church of the Redeemer, she has always felt welcomed, cared for, and loved authentically by the community that our church cultivates. She has been blessed by the relationships she has created while serving alongside other parishioners. Katy believes that God has called her now to serve on the Vestry to give back what she has received, and to support the church in carrying out its vision of serving all with humility, compassion and faithfulness.



ELLEN REGISTER

Nominee for Vestry 2025-2028

Ellen has been a member of Church of the Redeemer since 2021. She is a Lay Reader, Lector and Lay Eucharistic Visitor. She is also part of the “new” Church of the Redeemer Book Group. Ellen regularly enjoys Thursday Morning Bible Study and Sunday Adult Forums.

Ellen and her husband John moved to Hyde Park after 40 years in Hamilton, Ohio where they raised their 2 daughters, Sarah and Anne. In their “retirement years”, she and John enjoy having the time to reacquaint themselves with the Cincinnati

area. Outside of church, Ellen’s main volunteer focus is Planned Parenthood, and she has been involved with that organization wherever she’s lived for the past 55 years. Currently, Ellen serves on the Planned Parenthood Cincinnati Region Foundation board. “I love visiting our grands, reading, Northern Michigan summers, Canasta, and traveling,” says Ellen.

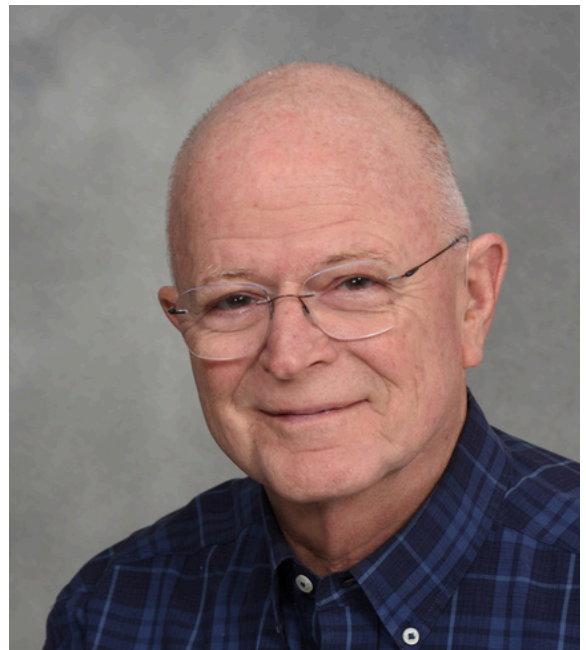
Ellen says that everything she has done at Church of the Redeemer has brought her joy. She believes God led her here to keep her close to a community of love. Accepting the call to stand for election to Vestry allows Ellen to honor God’s presence in her life - by serving and receiving with a grateful heart the blessing in that service.

BILL WEATHERS

Nominee for Vestry 2025-2028

Bill was confirmed in 1973 at Christ Episcopal Church in Bowling Green, Kentucky by Bishop Charles Marmion. He has been a parishioner at Church of the Redeemer for three years. Bill’s involvement has included music ministry, playing banjo and violin at The Banquet and at the Celtic Evening Service, as well as membership in the Second Half of Life ministry.

Bill and his wife Jackie have two sons, a daughter and four grandchildren. Bill is in the private practice of psychotherapy. When younger, Bill was a daily newspaper journalist on The Cincinnati Post and Kentucky Post for 21 years. He still writes. Bill has played piano since the age of 12.



“God is Love,” a conviction held by the writer of The First Epistle of John and by his mother, Bill loves Church of the Redeemer because we are a community focused on Love. When this community, following the God of Love, calls, he wants to say “yes.”

IVAN DELGADO-VELAZQUEZ

Nominee for Vestry 2025-2028

Ivan was born and raised in Puerto Rico, where he attended UPR - Mayaguez Campus, majoring in Mechanical Engineering. He works for GE Aerospace in the design and development of exhaust systems for military programs.

Raised in a Pentecostal household, Ivan transitioned to the Episcopal Church five years ago and was confirmed at the Church of the Redeemer two years ago. He currently serves as part of the Altar Guild.

The celebration of the Eucharist drew Ivan to the

Episcopal Church, particularly the fact that all are welcome. Through his involvement with the Altar Guild, Ivan has learned to appreciate the Eucharist as Christ's invitation to the Church to partner with him and be the light to a world in need. Being part of the Vestry will allow him to make a tangible contribution to this endeavor.



EDWARD T. POLASKI

Nominee for Member-at-large

Mission Funding Committee 2025-2027

Edward T Polaski has been a member of Church of the Redeemer since ~ 2005/06 when he and Cheryl Fast were married by the Rev. Bruce Freeman. In the subsequent years, he has been involved with several ministries including Habitat for Humanity, Freestore Food Bank, People Working Cooperatively and the MEAC annual Christmas Dinner.

Ed retired in 2001 following 46 years in the specialty chemical business in both sales and general management roles. He is currently doing sales and

consultancy work on a part time basis with a Chicago based chemical distributor, as well as starting his 3rd year as a Tax Counselor for AARP TaxAide. Travel, golf, swimming, and spending time at their second home in Laguna Niguel, CA takes up most of the rest of his time. In what he calls their "Brady Bunch" family, he and Cheryl, combined, have 5 children, 7 grandchildren with number 8 due in May.

Ed knows that he is very blessed and has lived a very good life. It is important that others, especially those not as well off deserve, as Habitat for Humanity most aptly puts it, 'a hand up, not a hand out'. It is this motto that draws him to serve others.



MARIA COLE

Nominee for Member-at-large

Mission Funding Committee 2025-2027

Maria and her husband, Andrew, have been active members of Church of the Redeemer since 2018. Having grown up Catholic in Cincinnati, Maria is deeply connected to The Episcopal Church's values of justice, compassion, and inclusion. She has served Church of the Redeemer in the Young Adult group, by ushering and reading for the Banquet, facilitating Godly Play, and assisting with the toddler education class. She is grateful to have had Church

of the Redeemer's support as a newlywed, young adult, and now as a parent to a toddler, Henry (2).

Professionally, Maria is the Program Manager at Ellequate, a Cincinnati-based startup focused on building equitable workplaces. With a background in nonprofit work, she is passionate about dismantling systemic barriers and advocating for impactful policy changes. In her free time, Maria enjoys listening to podcasts, reading, cooking, and spending time with Andrew, Henry, and their dog, Dolly.

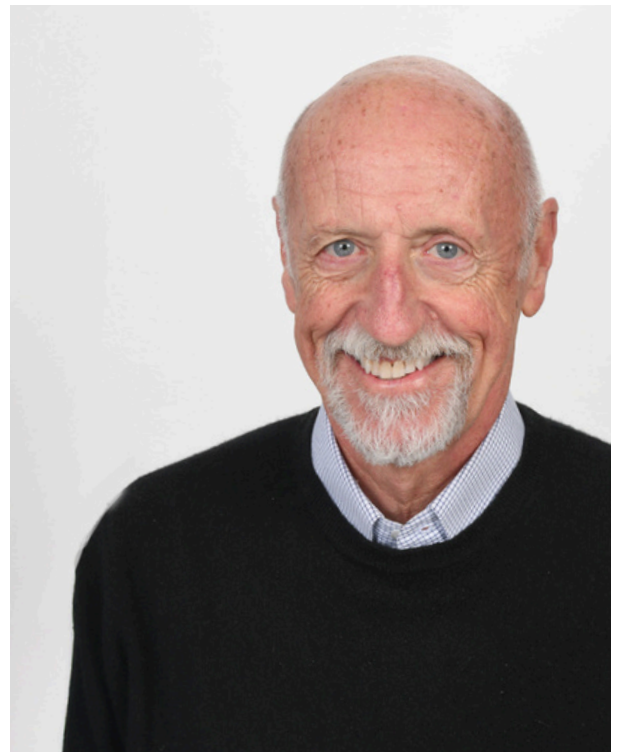
Her commitment to compassion, equity, and service aligns seamlessly with the Mission Funding Committee's purpose. She is excited to play a small role in granting money to valuable causes.

TOM KIRKWOOD

Nominee for Trustee of the

Permanent Property Fund 2025-2026

Tom joined Church of the Redeemer in 1980, serving in many ministries since. He was Warden and twice on Vestry, the first chair of Mission Board and of the Vestry Nominating Committee. He attended the College of Congregational Development, chaired the IHN / MEAC Mission Partnership Committee, served on Cornerstone and Enliven Our Vision capital campaign steering committees, the Cornerstone Building Project Team, and with Stewardship of God's House. He chaired Annual Giving and now chairs Planned Giving. He was a lector and now an usher, a sacristan, and a member of the Worship Team. He provided legal help for the Columbarium move, the IHN and MEAC/Eastminster acquisitions, COR/MEAC contractor disputes, clergy contracts, and more.



Before retiring, Tom was a partner at Thompson Hine and a construction claims mediator. He's been a trustee of Freestore Foodbank and on its finance, strategic, and development committees for 12 years. He was chair of finance and chair of the board of Cincinnati Nature Center and helped formulate its Endowment Investment Policy. He was a member of the ERS Affordable Living Board. Christine Andrew and Tom were married at Church of the Redeemer ten years ago.

Tom attended Indiana University's Lily Philanthropy Fundraising School with the Rev. Philip DeVaul. Upon completing 3/4th of the work towards a Certificate in Fund Raising Management, Tom then agreed to co-lead Church of the Redeemer's Planned Giving and now feels called to help see that those who make annual, capital, or planned gifts to Church of the Redeemer may be confident that our Permanent Property Fund continues to abide by the highest standards of endowment fund management.



TODD SCHWARTZ

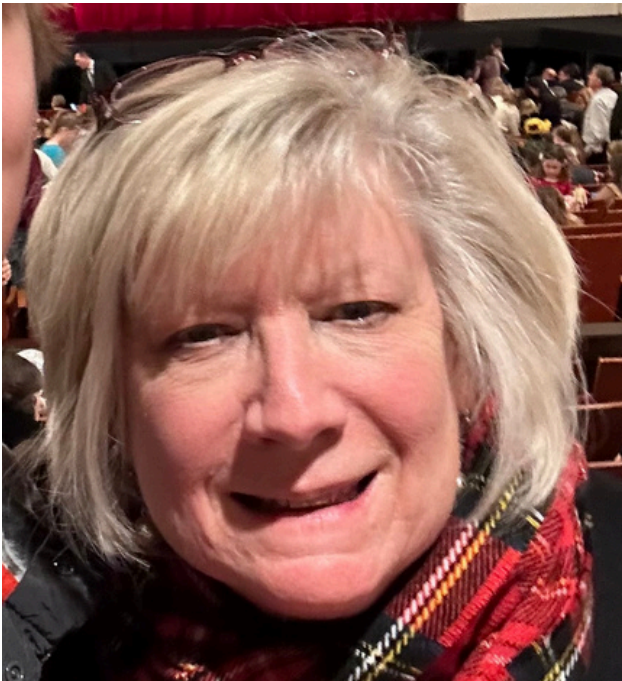
Alternate to the 2025 Diocesan Convention and Delegate to the Conventions in 2026 and 2027

Todd joined Church of the Redeemer in 2018 and was confirmed in 2022. He is a member of the Church of the Redeemer choir and also is working to coach our acolytes in their ministry. He was raised as a Southern Baptist, then was active in the Lutheran (ELCA) Church for many years before becoming involved in the Anglican and Episcopal Church.

A graduate of Miami University, Todd spent 28 years as a U.S. diplomat with the Department of State, including postings in Germany, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Qatar, the Philippines, Kuwait, Canada and Iraq. He retired from government service in 2015 and returned to his native Ohio with his wife Nancy.

Together, Nancy and Todd raised four children (three of whom also live in Cincinnati). He currently works as a consultant with Tapestry Networks.

The need for the Church to be active in proclaiming and living into God's vision of love and justice continues to grow – from the level of each member to each parish and diocese and the entire Anglican Communion, together with other communities of faith. Todd hopes that his experience in working with those of different faiths and nationalities under challenging circumstances may be valuable in forging the best paths forward for the Diocese of Southern Ohio.



APRIL CAIN

Alternate to the 2025 Diocesan Convention and Delegate to the Conventions in 2026 and 2027

A lifelong Episcopalian, April Cain has been a member of Church of the Redeemer for almost 3 years, serving as volunteer for Newcomer Events, a member of the Hospitality Team, member of the Second Half of Life Group, and is co-leader of the Church of the Redeemer Book Group. She serves as an Intercessor for the 11:00 a.m. service.

As an attorney and mediator, she worked in a law firm in Louisville, Kentucky, and served as Corporate Counsel/Chief Legal Officer for a medical malpractice insurance company. Additionally, she was on the electoral board for a large jurisdiction in her native Commonwealth of Virginia.

Currently retired, April enjoys family, traveling and volunteering for several charitable and social groups.

April has had deep emotional attachment to The Episcopal Church for her entire life. The Church has been a source of strength though life's challenges. Being of service to the Diocese of Southern Ohio would be an interesting and meaningful endeavor.

C.H. MAGUIRE

*Nominee for Trustee of the
Permanent Property Fund 2025-2027*

*C.H. Maguire's Bio will be listed in the digital version of
the Annual Report.*



2024 Annual Meeting Minutes

MINUTES TAKES ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2024
BY PATRICIA KOVACH, CLERK OF THE VESTRY

The Rev. Philip DeVaul, Rector, offered an opening prayer to call the meeting to order at 10:11 AM. Jeff Brokamp asked for a motion to officially change the meeting date as established in the Redeemer Code of Regulations, to state “the Annual Meeting shall be held not later than the third Sunday of February of each year”. Beth Weinewith made the motion and Tom Kirkwood seconded. The motion was unanimously approved. Phil next asked for a motion to appoint Patricia Kovach, Clerk of Vestry, as Secretary for the meeting. Ellen Zemke made the motion and Cynthia Walker seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Copies of the minutes from the 2023 Annual Meeting were included in the Annual Meeting report sent to the congregation the week prior to the meeting. John Krug made the motion to accept the minutes from the 2023 Annual Meeting as written, Andrea Rogers seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

SENIOR WARDEN REPORT

Phil thanked Jeff Brokamp for his service as Warden. Jeff recalled the time when he was Junior Warden during the pandemic and how Emily von Allmen held the Vestry together. It was a time of change and Redeemer came out in a better place. The leadership structure of the Vestry and the close work with the Staff has made a difference in engagement. Attendance exceeds pre-pandemic level and over 1000 people connect with Redeemer online every week.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Andrea Rogers, chair of the nominating committee presented the slate of nominees.

Vestry (2 year terms)

- Beth Weinewith, Senior Warden
- Mark Sesler, Junior Warden

Office Nominees

- Kathy Selker, Nominee for Trustee of the Redeemer Permanent Property
- Kate Burroughs, Nominee for Member-at-Large of the Redeemer Mission Funding Committee (second term)
- Jeff Cline, Nominee for Member-at-Large of the Redeemer Mission Funding Committee
- Sue Williams, Alternate Delegate to 2024 Diocesan Convention; Delegate 2025 and 2026
- Phil Smith, Alternate Delegate to 2024 Diocesan Convention; Delegate 2025 and 2026

Andrea asked for a motion to close the nominations and cast a ballot for the entire slate. Dick Adams made the motion and Jeff Brokamp seconded. The motion was unanimously approved. Andrea congratulated the new candidates, thanked the Nominating Committee (Jeff Brokamp, Kyle Roberts, Phil Smith, Emily Von Allmen, Cynthia Williams) for their discernment, and asked the parish for support and prayers for their new leaders.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Carter Kemper presented the Treasurer’s Report for 2023. He reported that the number of pledges increased as did the investment performance for 2023. He also mentioned that Phil’s sabbatical has been awarded a grant from the Lilly Foundation for Clergy Renewal. The focus this year has been on outreach, buildings and grounds and pastoral work.

RECTOR’S REMARKS

The long-time service of Missy Darling as Redeemer’s receptionist was acknowledged. Phil spoke about the new Bishop and how her emphasis will be on congregational development. Phil thanked the Vestry, Wardens and Staff for their hard work during the past year. Phil asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Cynthia Walker made the motion and Carol Hesser seconded. Phil offered a closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 10:52 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Patricia Kovach, Clerk of Vestry

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER
2944 ERIE AVENUE
CINCINNATI, OH 45208

2024 Vestry of the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer

Beth Weinewuth, *Senior Warden*, Mark Sessler, *Junior Warden*,
Carter Kemper, *Treasurer*, Kelly Schleker, *Assistant Treasurer*,
Patricia Kovach, *Clerk of the Vestry*

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Kathryn Albertson | Andrew Cole | Elizabeth Coley |
| David Haffner | Larry Kissel | Bain Massey |
| Amanda Rasche | Matthew Solomon | Cynthia Walker |
| Steve Zimmerman | | |