

Walking IN LOVE

2025 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

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From the Rector

How does a church take a pilgrimage? I don't mean how does a church offer a pilgrimage opportunity to a group of people – because that's obvious. It's something that has been done and will continue to be done at churches for years. And I'm excited about our current plans for that kind of pilgrimage to the border this Fall.

No, I'm asking, how does a whole church – a whole community – take a pilgrimage? How does a body of people most often recognized for attributes like stability, ritual, repetition, regularity – move? What does that look like? I believe the Church of the Redeemer knows well how to do this and has known it for decades even if it didn't always have the language for it: In 1979, Church of the Redeemer found itself in existential crisis – having lost a significant number of parishioners and having parted ways under difficult circumstances with their rector, the people of this church found ourselves wondering what it meant to be church, what would it mean for us to close our doors forever, and what we would have to do to make sure the church not only existed but mattered. To do that required transformation – required real spiritual movement. We didn't call it a pilgrimage at the time.

At the turn of the 21st century, Church of the Redeemer undertook a major building campaign. The goal wasn't just to have a bigger, prettier building: The goal was to make sure that Church of the Redeemer was a center of activity and welcome for the whole neighborhood – that we were able to invite people into our space, to make it theirs, to know they were welcomed and loved and supported by this church. To do that required transformation not only of the physical property, but of the people of this church – real spiritual movement. We didn't call it pilgrimage at the time. About a decade later, Church of the Redeemer decided we wanted to prioritize serving the community in more systemic ways. So, we raised money to create a large fund dedicated solely to outreach, and we purchased the properties on which Madisonville Education & Assistance Center and Found House: IHN (then called Interfaith Hospitality Network) were operating so we could help support them with capital improvements and ongoing care of their facilities. This was a major undertaking not only because of the amount of money raised and spent and the legal and logistical planning undertaken: It was major because it pushed Church of the Redeemer to understand our whole church differently in terms of our values and priorities – and that was a transformation through spiritual movement. We didn't call it pilgrimage at the time.

We didn't call any of these major times in Church of the Redeemer's life pilgrimage, but in fact each one was a spiritual journey taken with intention, by a people being transformed by the act of walking in love. That is pilgrimage. We are a people who understand that church must make an impact in the lives of those both within and outside the gathered community to be worth keeping the doors open. It is our reason for existing. And we are a church that expects real movement and transformation – real intention and real action that brings about real change and spiritual growth.

I would love for us to understand that we have been pilgrims for a long time. That is a part of who we are.

When I first arrived in this diocese, our Bishop was Tom Breidenthal. He was very fond of saying that it was the church's job to follow Jesus into the neighborhood. The idea being that it's not our job to bring Jesus to people but to head out into the world around us, see where Jesus is at work, and do likewise. I love that. Our current Bishop, Kristin Uffelman White, is very fond of reminding us that God is not elsewhere. The idea being that God is not distant, remote, removed, detached. Rather, God is right here among us. Present and active in the work of healing and reconciliation, mercy and peace and justice. I love that, too.

These two ideas are not at odds with one another at all. They feed into one another. And they both are at the center of Church of the Redeemer's work.

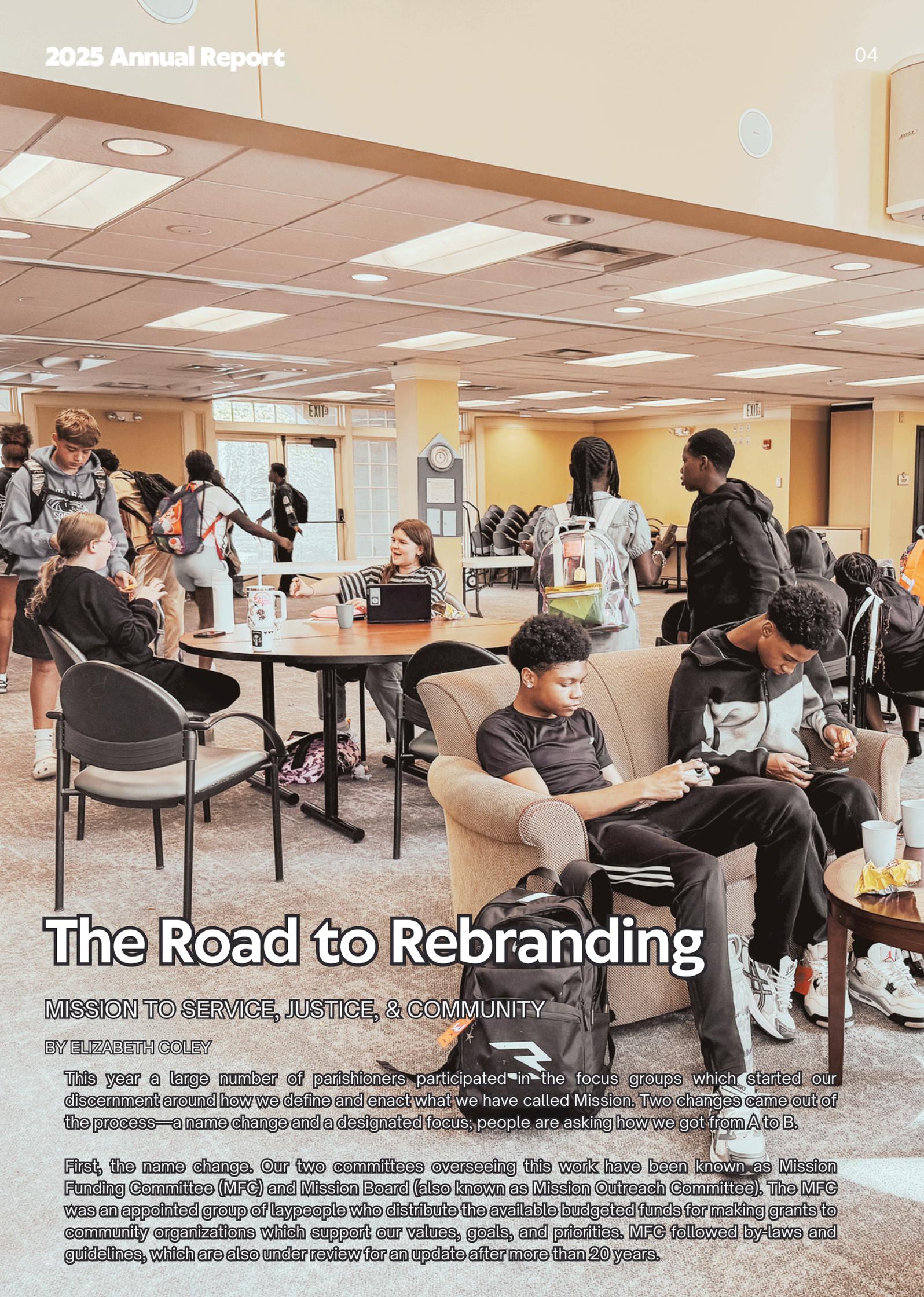
We recognize that God is present and active in the world around us. We open our building and focus our ministries on the care of the people God places in our lives, on the people of our neighborhood, on the communities that surround and inform our community. This is itself an act of pilgrimage: an act of walking with intention, of walking in love, of consciously understanding that we will not be the same people at the end of the journey as we were at the beginning. The acknowledgment of that transformation is at the heart of pilgrimage.

The other piece that is essential to pilgrimage is in fact the idea that you are heading to a sacred place – a holy location. And this is where the bishops are particularly helpful: Because if God is in the neighborhood, then the neighborhood is a sacred place. And if God is not elsewhere, then right here is a sacred place. It is not that we don't need to move – it is that when we enter into being church with intention. When we walk in love, we are always moving. It is my sincere hope that you will join me in exploring the pilgrimage of Church of the Redeemer this year – and that you will know how honored I am to be walking alongside you in all of it.

Your friend and brother in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip Hart DeVaul" followed by a cross symbol.

The Rev. Philip Hart DeVaul
Rector



The Road to Rebranding

MISSION TO SERVICE, JUSTICE, & COMMUNITY

BY ELIZABETH COLEY

This year a large number of parishioners participated in the focus groups which started our discernment around how we define and enact what we have called Mission. Two changes came out of the process—a name change and a designated focus; people are asking how we got from A to B.

First, the name change. Our two committees overseeing this work have been known as Mission Funding Committee (MFC) and Mission Board (also known as Mission Outreach Committee). The MFC was an appointed group of laypeople who distribute the available budgeted funds for making grants to community organizations which support our values, goals, and priorities. MFC followed by-laws and guidelines, which are also under review for an update after more than 20 years.

Mission Board was chaired by the two vestry members for Mission and included the leaders for our various ministries in the community (as well as our Deacon and the staff/clergy associate for Mission.) The functions and members remain the same—the names have changed.

Why not “Mission”? The word itself has a multitude of meanings, from outreach to door-to-door evangelizing to coerced conversion by colonial powers. We knew from the start that we wanted a more specific and apt name for what we do. After the focus groups were conducted, Tym House, Minister for Mission and Family Discipleship, Anny Steven-Gleason, Minister for Congregational Development, and the Rev. Joyce Keeshin, Assisting Priest, parsed the data, analyzed it by hand and with several AI tools, and dove into it for themes. It was clear that what the Church of the Redeemer congregation considers the essence of bringing love into the world is performing acts of service in our community aligned with rectifying needs and unfairness, which goes under the banner of justice. The new names applied to the two oversight committees are now Service, Justice, and Community Board and Service, Justice, and Community Funding Committee. SJC is the abbreviation, which I remember with the mnemonic “service to JC.”

Second, the focus. In the focus group discussions, a theme emerged for the target of our works in the world. Collectively, we felt called to support families, and through them their children, arguably our most vulnerable members of society. Many of our existing ministries where we provide volunteer services to another primary organization fit clearly into this focus: First Step Home (FSH) forms relationship with women in recovery, many of whom have children. Our customary Christmas ministry to FSH is a gift drive for these children. Madisonville Education & Assistance Center (MEAC) serves Madisonville families and their children. Our monthly and holiday food gathering drives put food on the tables for the children of Madisonville. Our Freestore Foodbank’s monthly ministry fills weekend food packs for children who would otherwise go undernourished when they are out of school. But what about our other traditional outreach ministries? We intend to continue creating community with our elders at Madison Villa in partnership with Episcopal Retirement Services (ERS). We will still build ramps and rake leaves for our physically challenged neighbors in partnership with People Working Cooperatively (PWC). Our successful after-school ministry with Clark Montessori is the only one in which COR is the primary organization. Otherwise, we work as auxiliary hands to organizations already in the space we wish to support.

What about new ministries? We are open to and seeking more volunteer opportunities to serve at-risk or systemically excluded teenage youth. The exclusion may be on account of discrimination or vulnerability based on poverty, race, disability, or LGBTQ+ status. We will be looking for volunteer coordinators to help us make in-roads as we work side-by-side with community organizations with expertise in these areas of need.

But I thought our focus was homelessness? Isn’t that still a desperate need? Don’t we care? The answer there is a resounding yes, we do. And while the initiatives regarding homelessness may fall outside the SJC Board, we are beginning a powerful new relationship with Cincinnati Homeless Coalition, launching with an educational focus and later merging into hands-on work. Similarly, we are in a partner relationship with St. Andrews, Evanston and a larger initiative with Found House-IHN to create comprehensive solutions for unsheltered families that go well beyond emergency overnight care to stable transitional housing (1-2 years). Church of the Redeemer contributed seed money for concept drawings of a 30-apartment transitional complex adjacent to St. Andrews to kick off the project’s capital campaign.

While we have heard the words change and focus a lot in recent months, they need not be alarming. We continue our commitment to volunteerism wherever the will to do so takes us and we have lay leaders willing to organize the ministries; but now we focus our eyes on new opportunities to address the needs of at-risk children. If you are feeling personally called to step into a leadership position as these new opportunities arise, the SJC Board is here to support and welcome you aboard.



Perfectly aligned with our new SJC by Christina Duffy

I joined Church of the Redeemer’s Service, Justice, and Community (SJC) Ministry in the Fall 2025 and am excited to partner with more wonderful parishioners. I’ve served on the board of Found Village, a local organization aiming to shift the conditions of foster care in our city, further detailed in the following paragraphs, so, when I learned of the findings from the listening sessions that other parishioners recognized the need in our community for more resources for marginalized youth, I felt I found my calling!

Young people involved with the child welfare system generally struggle to thrive in adulthood. In Hamilton County, over 100 young people “age out” of the system each year with no permanent family. These young people are left to navigate the adult world on their own, without networks of support or financial assistance. Thus, it is little surprise that young adults who age out of foster care make lower incomes, are less likely to complete their educations, and experience higher rates of arrest and homelessness than adults in the general population. Found Village interprets this ongoing instability not as an illness or a deficiency in young people, but as evidence of weaknesses in the medicalized and systemic approaches used in their care.

Found Village works to change these outcomes by connecting young people who have been involved with the child welfare system to our Found Village Community Model of Care—providing multiple years of client-centered, relational support – like access to trusted adults, safe peer environments, and basic resource support. It connects young people between the ages of 13 and 16 through referrals from Hamilton County Job & Family Services and commits to serve them through the transition out of foster care into adult economic independence.

As a result, young adults in the Found Village community will build economic mobility, as indicated by their maintenance of independent housing and work that pays a quality wage/training enrollment to build career skills. Found Village works with young people to ensure that their economic mobility lasts for a lifetime, ensuring that their future generations grow up outside of the cycle of poverty.

My hope in serving in the SJC Ministry is to ensure our actions and activities are aligned with the mission of serving marginalized youth in our city. In keeping this laser focus, I think we can collaborate more effectively and therefore serve more effectively and truly help change the lives of our young people in our city.

Mission Funding 2025

In 2025, the SJC Funding Committee awarded eight grants totaling \$43,200 to the following organizations:

1. People Working Cooperatively: \$12,000 to support the Ramp Building program. Funds are used exclusively for ramp components, supporting a combination of building aluminum and wooden ramps, as well as refurbishing existing wood and aluminum ramps. Each ramp costs approximately \$6,000.

2. Episcopal Retirement Services: \$8,000 to support the expansion of the Swipe 'N' Dine program, buying more meals for vulnerable seniors living at home. The Swipe 'N' Dine meal voucher program for seniors addresses the crisis of social isolation and its devastating health impacts.

3. Found House - Interfaith Housing Network: \$7,700 to fund its flagship Emergency Shelter program, which is a longstanding and widely recognized initiative that seamlessly integrates community support with professional services to give families the tools, resources, and support to overcome loss of housing. These funds will support three weeks of hosting emergency shelter families in an extended-stay style hotel. Hotel expenses are approximately \$700 per family per week.

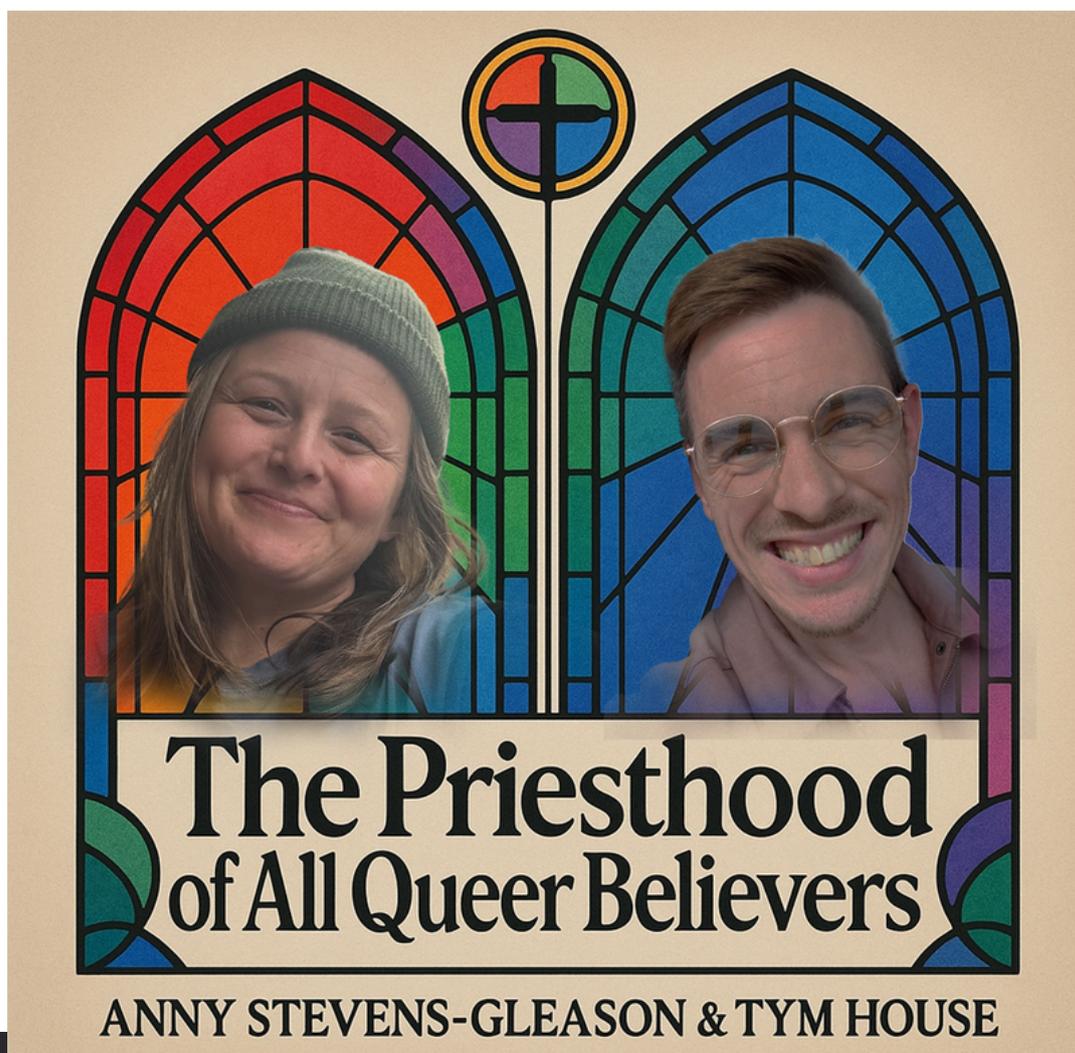
4. Freestore Foodbank: \$6,000 to purchase nutritious, shelf-stable food items for the Power Pack program. Each pack includes a carefully selected mix of child-friendly items that require little to no preparation and are designed to help bridge the weekend meal gap for elementary students facing food insecurity. These funds will support maintaining the strength and stability of this program as food prices continue to rise.

5. Greater Cincinnati Homeless Coalition: \$3,750 to support the Faith Communities Education program at Redeemer. The funds will cover the costs associated with a 12-18 month program aimed at educating the congregation on the causes and solutions to homelessness and how the parish can get involved in the fight to end homelessness.

6. Found Village: \$3,750 to support the expansion of its Coaching program, which supports young people through one-on-one and group coaching sessions, participation alongside young people in community enrichment events, and outreach activities. Investment in these services will directly create opportunities for young people to build trust with safe adults, explore their talents and interests, and access safe spaces in their communities.

7. First Step Home: \$2,000 to fund uncovered treatment costs for clients who are uninsured or underinsured for the services they receive. The primary goal of this project is to ensure that women seeking treatment for Substance Abuse Disorder and in need of comprehensive, evidence-based services can access care without financial barriers.





At the Intersection of Queer Joy and Sacred Story

BY ANNY STEVENS- GLEASON

The Priesthood of All (Queer) Believers shares the Gospel through laughter, honesty, and love.

A Sanctuary

The “recording” light is pressed and glows red in a small office here, at Church of the Redeemer. A mess of cables blanket the floor. Tym House and I sit across from each other, leaning into microphones.

“Are you ready?” I asks.

“I think so. Are you ready?” Tym replies.

“You have to be right on top of it.”

“Oh, okay.”

“For reals.”

Laughter fills the space - the kind of laughter that cracks open something holy.

That is how every episode of *The Priesthood of All (Queer) Believers* begins, with honesty and vulnerability creating a space to hold humor, to speak truth to faith of the LGBTQIA + community.

Born out of Individual Need

The Priesthood podcast was born out of conversations that Tym and I had about our faith community, the queer community in Cincinnati, and our shared longing to bring our whole selves into both. We sought to explore what living in and at the intersection of the two communities can look like. In many ways, the podcast has become a pilgrimage - not toward a destination, but into deeper truth. Each episode is a step on a journey we take together, discovering sacred ground in unexpected places.

A note on language: Throughout this article I use "queer" - a word that generates discomfort for some, and I want to honor that.

For much of the 20th century, this word was used as a weapon against LGBTQ+ people. People I love have had this word spat at them. I have had this word spat at me. So why claim it?

Because we are resurrection people. What was killed - made into something that wounded us - we have raised from the dead. When we reclaim 'queer,' we participate in the central mystery of our faith: death is not the end of the story. What the world intended for harm, God transforms into new life. Like the wounds Jesus carries, the word still carries its scars, but those scars now witness to transformation.

Our own Diocese recognizes this complexity. In "A Guide to LGBTQ+ Inclusion and Safety for Churches and Ministries," they note that "Queer" functions as "an umbrella term for anyone who is not heterosexual and/or cisgender," while acknowledging that "some older LGBTQ+ people may still associate this word with its historical use as a slur." This dual reality—reclamation alongside residual pain—is precisely why careful, loving conversation matters.

'Queer' today serves as both identity and invitation, making space for all who live at the margins of traditional categories. It represents self-determination - a refusal to be defined by rejection, and an assertion of the fullness of who God created us to be.

I recognize not everyone in the LGBTQ+ community embraces this term, particularly those for whom it still carries the sting of personal trauma. I'm not asking you to use it. I'm asking you to understand why, for those of us who claim it, this word represents hope, resistance, and the transformative power of resurrection.

Our curiosity of living in this intersection is the driving force for the podcast, a podcast that has grown into a ministry of presence - part storytelling and part evangelism. Each episode varies, sharing truth through many voices - That queer stories are holy and sacred and bearing witness to how God's love shows up everywhere and in everything.

Incarnation

Some days holiness shows up in rhinestones and heels, other days in clericals, and other days still in yoga pants.

Molly Mormen, a drag queen whose gentleness filled the recording space, shared that she began doing drag to fill a void—to help others, to find purpose, to change the world in whatever ways she could. “I moved forward in a path that I think glorifies God and my experience as one of His creations,” she said, “rather than being told that I will never be good enough.”

Molly's faith stands alongside resilience. “I believe God made me exactly this way,” she told us. “Not in spite of my queerness, but through it.”

She spoke about the responsibility she feels to be visible, especially for young people—to embody the possibility of a future marked by joy, success, and belonging. Alexander Cameron, a well known Cincinnati drag performer, echoed this hope, sharing how deeply he longed for role models growing up. “If I can be that person for one person,” he said, “my job is done.”

Repeatedly, our guests offer something incarnational: lived stories of God made real in flesh and breath. Lady Phaedra once told us, “I believe God made me gay, not because God needed me to be gay, but because I may be the test for those around me... owning who you are and owning your own relationship with the creator.”

These moments—honest, embodied, brave—are where holiness reveals itself. We have been entrusted with these stories, words made flesh, making the invisible visible. Through them, I am reminded that God meets us in bodies, stories, and presence.

The Altar of Community

This understanding of God incarnate is shared by me, Tym, and Church of the Redeemer—but it is not universal. Nearly every episode carries stories of harm inflicted by the Church: rejection, exclusion, and spiritual trauma.

The podcast does not turn away from these stories. It holds them.

We understand painful stories as sacred, too. They are points of intersection where queer joy and suffering meet at the altar of community. Community transforms individual wounds into shared liberation. This is the work of the altar: our stories are bound together, our freedom intertwined. What one person cannot carry alone, the community holds.

Our hope is that these stories can be lifted as offerings—placed on the altar and transformed. The podcast itself becomes that altar: a space of repair, reconciliation, and truth-telling. As Tym often says, it is about “being a place for reconciliation... where queer folks feel not just welcomed but truly affirmed.”



Evangelism as Listening

Through this ministry, I have come to believe that listening—deep, attentive listening—is a form of proclamation.

When we listen, we honor the humanity of the person before us. In many ways, the podcast inverts traditional evangelism. Instead of preaching toward conversion, it listens toward communion. This communion is rooted in relationship, in recognizing God’s truth in your story and in mine.

Every time someone shares their truth, the Church is given the privilege of hearing the Gospel anew—in a different voice, a different body, a different register.

What began as a small experiment has become a ministry reaching beyond Redeemer, affirming a truth our world urgently needs: queerness and holiness are not opposites. They are reflections of divine mystery, part of the shared priesthood we all carry.

A Future Full of Wonder

We have plans—more guests, on-location recordings, new series—but what remains constant is the simple practice of holding space, sharing stories, and trusting that God shows up.

My hope for listeners is simple: that they hear love. A love that knows every story is sacred. A love that affirms dignity and celebrates queerness as blessing. A love that says: your life matters, your story has purpose, you belong here, and your future holds joy.

CCD isn't about starting a new ministry or adding more programs to our calendar. It's about shaping how we think, how we make decisions, and how we work together behind the scenes.

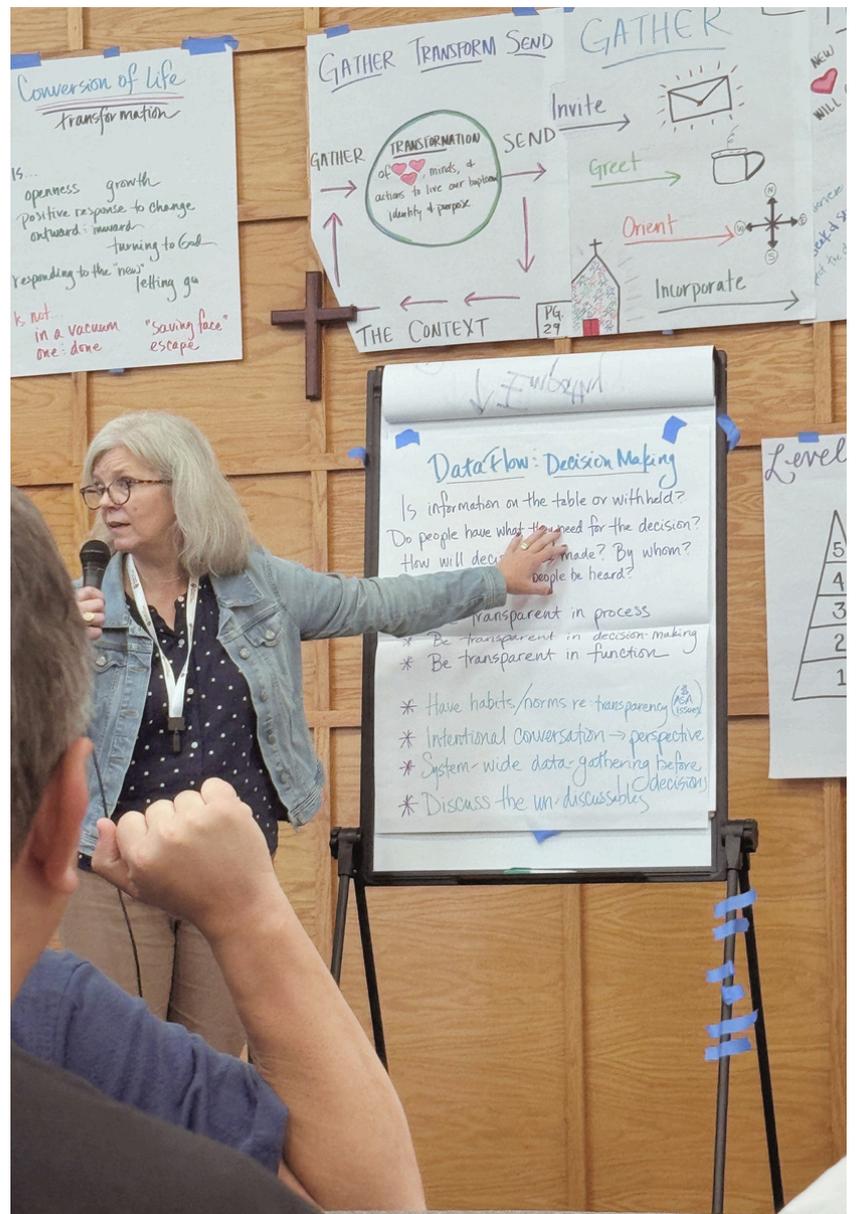
This past summer, a group of six from Church of the Redeemer—both laypeople and clergy—took part in the very first **College for Congregational Development (CCD)** offered in the Diocese of Southern Ohio, held at the beautiful Procter Camp & Conference Center.

If you're not familiar with CCD, it's an intensive and inspiring training program designed to help church leaders—both lay and ordained—learn how to strengthen and grow their congregations in healthy, sustainable ways. The program combines organizational development tools with spiritual formation, helping us build stronger leadership, deeper teamwork, and a better understanding of what it means to be the Church in today's world.

Church of the Redeemer has now sent 3 cohorts to CCD, and the work of CCD has been silently permeating our community. But for me, this year felt extra special because we were able to participate locally, alongside friends and colleagues from other parishes in our own diocese. We were blessed to be guided by Bishop White, who served as one of our facilitators, as well as our very own Anny Stevens-Gleason and former Church of the Redeemer staff member Brad Gough—what a treat to learn from familiar faces!

Growing Together

BY CONSTANCE MASSEY



Over six days, we dove deep into learning together—exploring new organizational models, meeting new friends from around the Diocese, and discovering more about our own leadership styles and personality types. There was plenty of laughter, reflection, prayer, and even some “aha” moments as we talked about what we could bring back to our home churches. And the journey isn’t over yet—CCD is a two-year program, so we’ll be heading back next summer for another week of learning and growing. Our task now is to take what we’ve learned and put it to work right here at Church of the Redeemer.

Yes, the time commitment is big—but the rewards are even bigger. By building a shared foundation of learning and language among clergy and lay leaders, we’re equipping our church to meet challenges large and small. These models and tools are already used successfully in Episcopal congregations around the country, including ours. They help churches make thoughtful decisions and set clear strategies for the future. We’re also building relationships with others across the Diocese and with the bishop’s staff—a reminder that we are part of something much larger than ourselves. There’s so much we can learn from our fellow Episcopalians—and there is just as much that we can offer in return.

CCD isn’t about starting a new ministry or adding more programs to our calendar. It’s about shaping how we think, how we make decisions, and how we work together behind the scenes. We learned about navigating conflict with grace, giving and receiving honest feedback, and understanding that every ministry has a life cycle—sometimes it’s time to renew and strengthen a ministry, and sometimes it’s time to let it come to a natural close. As I thought about our theme for this year at Church of the Redeemer, Pilgrimage, CCD led me to a number of questions. How do we better meet



the needs of all who worship with us with programs that help them along their personal pilgrimages? Are we supporting the pilgrimage journey of our collective life as a parish with the right structure and resources? There is so much to think about!

One of my favorite takeaways was a simple but powerful model called “**Gather, Transform, Send.**” It sums up our work as the Church:

“The unique purpose and work of a congregation is to gather those called by God into Christ’s Body, the Church—a community of transformation of mind, heart, and action—and to send these same people into the world to be and to act as God’s loving and transforming presence.”

It’s a familiar idea, but spending time reflecting on it at CCD gave it new depth for me. Especially in today’s world, our church is being called to step into the spaces where people are hurting or searching for meaning. More than ever, those inside and outside our congregation are looking for peace, hope, and connection. If we can stay centered on this simple rhythm—to gather, to transform, and to send—then everything we do at Church of the Redeemer will continue to reflect God’s love in a powerful and authentic way.

On a personal note, that week was a gift. It was the first time I’d spent such a focused stretch of time thinking only about my involvement and commitment to the Church of the Redeemer. I’ve been part of this community for many years and served in lots of ministries, but this experience felt different. It was a week filled with prayer—both shared and personal—learning, reflection, and imagining what our church can become in the future.

I came away reminded that no matter how strong we are, we can always grow stronger. No matter how effective we are, we can always learn new ways to serve. And no matter how vibrant our community already is, there are always new opportunities to share God’s love with one another and with the world around us.

The Hyde Park Church Collective

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE REV. DR. HERSCHEL WADE



The Hyde Park Church Collective is a partnership of churches in the Hyde Park area with shared dreams and visions for our communities, within the church walls and beyond. While it began with a focus on education and Christian formation, that is growing. I call the collective a movement. It is not static; it is dynamic. It breathes, speaks, and gathers the people of God not for pragmatism, reduced costs, or efficiency, but because we are better together than divided. We are better together using our diverse gifts, ideas, passions, and resources given by God for the collective good. The Hyde Park Church Collective was born for this reason and exists to glorify God.

For decades, the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, Knox Presbyterian Church, Hyde Park Community United Methodist Church, and St. Mary's Parish operated largely independently, despite being only blocks apart. Our engagement reflected an age of self-protection and isolation. While our lives intersected, our ministries and testimonies rarely did. Still, common ground and proximity whispered for collaboration. Choirs sang together, ministries occasionally partnered, and over time the Holy Spirit clarified the call—toward unity, solidarity, trust, and Christian love. This vision speaks a better word than the divisive narratives shaping both the nation and the Church today. We are now more than six months into this holy collaboration, experiencing outcomes beyond the original intent. I believe that God approves and has declared The Hyde Park Church Collective to be “very good.”

The collective began between Knox Presbyterian Church, Hyde Park Community United Methodist Church, and the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, with Christian education as a shared starting point. We believed this focus could lead to broader collective ministries and become something greater than the sum of its parts. That greater whole includes relationship-building, resource-sharing, Christian solidarity, idea exchange, joined resistance to injustice, and unified proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ. Above all, the collective offers a foretaste of the unified Church Christ desires.

The beginnings of the collective emerged from spirit-led curiosity until a pivotal moment: Dr. Ellen F. Davis was coming to Church of the Redeemer, and I wanted to share the event with our neighbors. A medical diagnosis delayed plans for Dr. Davis, but within a month of my first contact, education leaders from Church of the Redeemer, Knox Presbyterian, and Hyde Park Community United Methodist were meeting to plan a fall 2025 lecture circuit. St. Mary's Parish joined later, guided by thoughtful ecumenical care and openness. We are blessed by Haley Metzger's leadership, deep faith, and generosity of spirit, which continue to shape transformative conversations across traditions.

The Hyde Park Church Collective has already proven to be a blessing to our churches and the wider Hyde Park community. On September 17, 2025, the Collective launched its first Fall Lecture Circuit Series featuring three influential voices. In September, Dr. Dan McClellan opened the series, followed by Cole Arthur Riley in October, and April Ajoy in November. Each speaker engaged in difficult, timely topics while modeling vulnerability, compassion, and the dignity of human becoming. Most importantly, I walked away believing that the goal of human engagement is not division or destruction, but unity and communal love. The Collective will continue hosting speakers in winter and spring 2026.

We are still in the early stages of building and envisioning the Collective. I believe it was the Holy Spirit, optimism, and quick trust among Tina Hubert, Sarah Peese, and me that allowed this work to take root. From the beginning, we operated from abundance, believing the Collective would faithfully serve the Body of Christ. Tina, Sarah, and I are 100% for ourselves and 100% for our teams, and we have grown fond of one another. Supported by dedicated colleagues, the Fall Lecture Circuit created welcoming spaces for the public and church members alike, across three locations.

Shared interests across our communities position the Collective well for future efforts. Collaboration removes redundancy and strengthens adult education by enabling sought-after speakers, large audiences, and meaningful conversations—perhaps even rekindling curiosity among those who have felt disconnected from church. Looking ahead, the Collective will move toward shared action in justice, service, caregiving, and healing. Our distinct identities will remain intact, even as we live more fully into our shared calling as the Church. At times, we will need a collective voice not only for resources, but because we need one another. This is what the Collective offers. This is its superpower.

I believe that The Hyde Park Church Collective is a sign that God is still at work in the Church and the world. We invite the entire community to be part of this holy, creative work.



Walking Together

A SHARED PILGRIMAGE OF MEMORY, CARE, AND COMMUNITY

BY MIREYA VALDES-MEDINA

In a year when Church of the Redeemer has named pilgrimage as its guiding theme, it is fitting to reflect on a ministry that embodies pilgrimage not as a destination, but as a way of walking—together—through uncertainty, vulnerability, and profound love. The partnership between Church of the Redeemer and Episcopal Retirement Services (ERS), shaped through the leadership of Shannon Braun, Director of the Center for Memory Support and Inclusion at ERS, and Becca Morehous, Assisting Minister for Pastoral Care at Church of the Redeemer, offers a compelling witness to what relational, bilateral ministry can become.

This is not a program designed for people. It is a shared journey undertaken with them.

The Seeds of a Partnership

The roots of this partnership stretch back to 2018, when Church of the Redeemer became one of five pilot congregations in Dementia Inclusive Cincinnati, an initiative connected to ERS and the Alzheimer's Association. From the beginning, Church of the Redeemer distinguished itself not simply as a host site, but as a congregation willing to ask difficult questions: How do we remain a spiritual home for people experiencing cognitive decline? How do we care for caregivers? How do we reduce stigma rather than reinforce it?

Early educational programs and community conversations revealed both the depth of need and the longing for safe, stigma-free spaces. People came. They stayed. They spoke honestly. The work mattered.

When Shannon joined ERS full-time in early 2020, the partnership deepened even as the pandemic disrupted nearly every model of gathering. Rather than retreat, Church of the Redeemer and ERS adapted, expanding accessibility and inclusion.

A Ministry Shaped by Listening

One of the most enduring expressions of this partnership is the twice-monthly caregiver support group co-facilitated by Shannon and Becca. Originally offered on Zoom to accommodate caregivers who could not leave loved ones alone, the group quickly became a lifeline. Participants now join from across Ohio and beyond—from rural communities where dementia-specific support simply does not exist. Some are members of Church of the Redeemer. Many are not. All are welcomed fully.

The group defies easy labels. It is not therapy, nor is it a lecture series. It is a place where caregivers speak honestly about exhaustion, fear, humor, grief, and love. They trade practical strategies—how to respond to repeated questions, how to navigate changing roles—and they bear witness to one another's losses as identities and relationships shift.

Over time, something deeper emerges: community.

Pilgrimage That Is Not Chosen

Caregiving for someone with dementia is rarely a journey people choose. Again and again, caregivers voice the same truth: “I didn’t sign up for this.” And yet, it is undeniably a pilgrimage—marked by thresholds such as diagnosis, loss of independence, and changing communication, and sustained by companionship rather than answers.

As Becca reflects, pilgrimage is defined not only by where we go, but by who we walk alongside and how we walk together. Within the caregiver group, pilgrimage becomes communal. No one walks alone.

Stories that feel unspeakable elsewhere—about a fallen tree asked about every day, a drawer full of hidden pill bottles, a spouse who no longer remembers a shared life—are received with recognition rather than judgment. The ordinary becomes sacred.

Transformation Through Relationship

This ministry is deeply reciprocal. While Church of the Redeemer offers trust, pastoral presence, and space, ERS brings experience, expertise, and a citywide vision for inclusion. Each shapes the other.

Shannon often describes herself not as a dementia expert, but as a student of dementia—learning continually from the lived experiences of caregivers and those with memory loss. That posture aligns seamlessly with Church of the Redeemer’s pastoral ethos: listening first, responding with compassion, and remaining open to being changed.

The ripple effects are tangible. Parishioners who first encounter Shannon through the support group are invited into broader community programs—arts experiences, museum visits, and social engagement opportunities designed for people with dementia and their care partners. Individuals newly facing diagnosis meet with Shannon one-on-one, often before they are ready to speak publicly, finding guidance grounded in dignity rather than fear.

Even when caregiving ends in death, community often remains. Members of an earlier caregiver

group continued meeting long after their spouses died, carrying forward friendships forged in vulnerability. What began as caregiving support became grief companionship.

Hospitality as Witness

Church of the Redeemer’s role in this work extends beyond programming. The church has become a place where cognitive change is neither hidden nor feared. Early-stage dementia groups meet in familiar rooms. Education and conversation happen openly. Belonging is not dependent on productivity, clarity of memory, or independence.

In a culture that often sidelines those experiencing cognitive loss, Church of the Redeemer proclaims—by action—that every person remains integral to the Body of Christ.

A Pilgrimage Still Unfolding

As Church of the Redeemer reflects on the past year, this partnership stands as a living illustration of pilgrimage as an ongoing posture rather than a completed project. Dementia does not resolve neatly. Grief does not end on a schedule. What endures is the commitment to walk together.

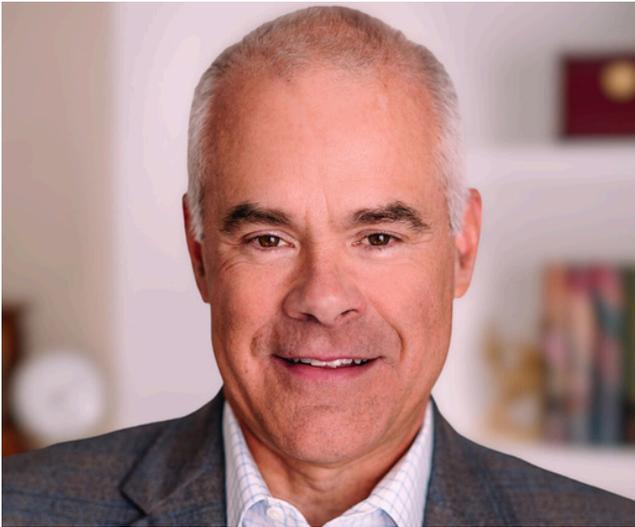
Future possibilities continue to emerge—trainings, expanded education, deeper collaboration—but they arise organically from trust and relationship rather than strategy alone. In this shared journey of memory, care, and community, Church of the Redeemer has not simply partnered with ERS; it has allowed itself to be shaped by the road itself.

Pilgrimage, after all, is rarely about arriving somewhere new. More often, it is about discovering—again and again—that we are not alone on the way.

A critical part of our Caregiver Group is privacy, therefore no pictures were featured.



2026 Vestry Nominees



MARK SESLER

Nominee for Senior Warden 2026-2028

Mark is a lifelong Episcopalian who grew up in Columbus, where his family attended St. Mark's and St. John's Worthington. After graduating from the University of Cincinnati, he met Audrey, and they were married at Redeemer in August 1991. They have two sons: Matt (30), who lives in Montreal, and Drew (27), who lives in Cleveland with his wife, Grace.

Mark has served in several leadership roles at Redeemer. He is currently Junior Warden and also serves as a Chalice Bearer, Lay Reader, Lay Eucharistic Visitor, and participant in the Lunchtime Bible Study. If elected, he looks forward to joining the long line of excellent Senior Wardens who have led Redeemer during his time here.

ANDREA ROGERS

Nominee for Jr. Warden 2026-2028

A lifelong Episcopalian, Andrea joined Redeemer in 2008. She served on the Search Committees for the Director of Music, Brett Scott and our Rector, Philip DeVaul. Andrea has served on the Parish Discernment Committees for four candidates for ordination. Currently, Andrea chairs the Worship Intercessors and serves on the Altar Guild, as a Reader, and Chalicist, and she loves being a part of the Thursday Bible study.



Andrea is a widow. Her husband Paul and her have two adult children. Philip Rogers and Laura have three boys, Charlie, Lincoln and Wyatt. Julia Joyce and Brad have two boys, Liam and Gus. Andrea loves grandparenting as well as gardening, bird feeding, spectating soccer, basketball, football and many others. She also enjoys music, movies and the outdoors.

Andrea feels honored to be involved in this vibrant community and wants to be a part of the leadership to keep it strong and growing us in the ways of Love, service, and justice.



JANE ALLAN

*Nominee for Member-at-large
Mission Funding Committee 2026-2029*

Jane was born on a farm in southern Indiana. After college, she taught grade school in Chicago where she met and married her Canadian husband. They moved eastward eventually ending up in Montreal, Quebec. They had two children and were active in an Anglican Church. Tragically, her husband died suddenly of a heart attack while jogging. Suddenly, Jane was a single parent with a seven and ten year old. God's presence in her life

and the support of her church community helped her in this difficult time.

She returned to teaching and taught English as a second language to immigrants, refugees and francophone adults. Still active in her church, she was Chairperson of The Open Door, a drop-in/soup kitchen for the homeless and marginalized, operated by her church. When the Syrian war began, the church wanted to sponsor a family. The Refugee Support Team was formed, and Jane headed the Fundraising team. Thankfully, a family of six was able to immigrate to Canada.

“As my children were now living in Cincinnati, I realized it was time for me to return to the U.S. Three years ago I moved to an apartment in Hyde Park near my children and grandchildren. What a gift to find Redeemer near by. I visited one Sunday and knew this was where I was to be. I am now an intercessor at the banquet and am in my second year of volunteering at the after school program for the Clark students. I feel honoured to be asked to serve on this committee.”



ANITA DOHN, MD MSc

*Nominee for Member-at-large
Mission Funding Committee 2026-2029*

Anita is a retired family physician with a public health degree. Her background includes academic medicine, 15 years as an Episcopal cross-cultural missionary, caring for the uninsured and underinsured at an FQHC clinic, serving on the diocesan Sustainable Development Goals Grants Committee, and being a Diocesan Convention delegate several times. Service on this committee offers an opportunity for understanding and involvement in the heart for service and mission of the Church of the Redeemer today.

SEAN MAHER

*Nominee for Member-at-large
Mission Funding Committee 2026-2027*

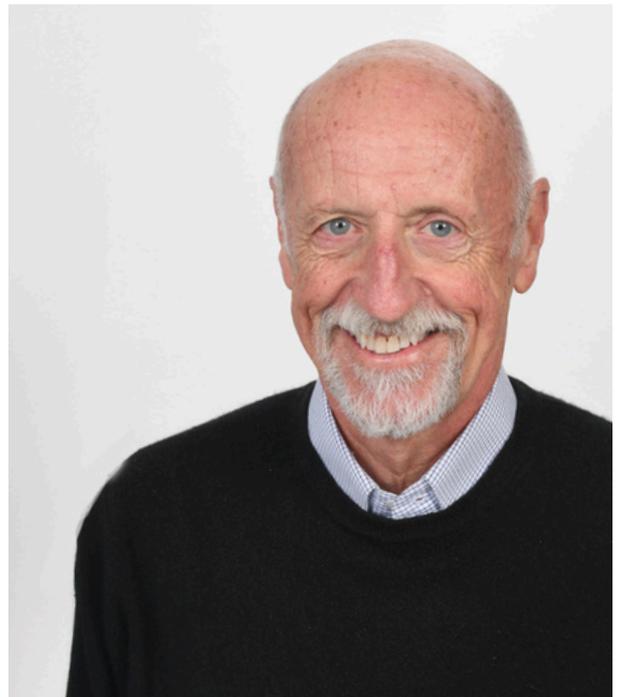
A California native, Sean has been living in Cincinnati for 25 years. His wife, Maureen and he have been married for 25 years, and they have two young adult children, Emma and Mikias. Sean teaches History and Social Studies at Deer Park High School and is a strong advocate for public education. Raised Lutheran, Sean is a newer Episcopalian and is thankful to have found a church community here at Redeemer that embodies Christian love and service.



TOM KIRKWOOD

*Nominee for Trustee of the
Permanent Property Fund 2026-2029*

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.



CYNTHIA BLOCKSOM

Alternate to the 2026 Diocesan Convention and Delegate to the Conventions in 2027 and 2028

Cynthia, a lifelong Episcopalian, has been a member of Redeemer since 1980. She and her husband, David, were married here and has faithfully served in many ministries over the years. She currently serves as a Eucharistic Visitor and leads the Funeral Reception Ministry.

Cynthia enjoys time with her family, traveling, and is committed to protecting the environment. She considers the Church a lifelong source of strength and members loved as her extended family. She would be honored to be elected as an alternate delegate to the convention.



MATTHEW CAREY

Alternate to the 2026 Diocesan Convention and Delegate to the Conventions in 2027 and 2028

Matthew and his wife were married at Redeemer in 2016 while living in Hyde Park. They moved to Montgomery in 2021 where we the live with their 2 daughters, Charlotte (6) and Sophie (3). They enjoy going to the park, the gym to work out, and meeting new neighbors and friends. Mathrew moved to Cincinnati after graduating from Ohio State in 2010, and has worked in manufacturing as an engineer for 15 years, and is now in sales, all at the same company, Cincinnati Thermal Spray, Inc.

2025 Annual Meeting Minutes

MINUTES TAKES ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2025
BY PATRICIA KOVACH, CLERK OF THE VESTRY

The Rev. Philip DeVaul, Rector, offered an opening prayer to call the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m. Phil then appointed Patricia Kovach, Clerk of Vestry, as Secretary for the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Copies of the minutes from the 2024 Annual Meeting were included in the Annual Report sent to the congregation the week prior to the meeting. Phil made the motion to accept the minutes from the 2024 Annual Meeting as written, Mark Sesler seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

SENIOR WARDEN REPORT

Beth Weinewuth presented a summary of the 2024 year, the theme of which was "Nourished by Love". She cited that this was also the theme of Phil's sabbatical. During that time, the Staff and lay leaders did a lot. The after-school program for Clark Montessori students, led by Tym House, was expanded. The Hospitality Team offered Sunday Coffee Hours, Newcomers' Happy Hours and several block parties. The Adult Forum, led by Rev. Dr. Herschel Wade, grew and added occasional outside speakers. The Investment Advisory Committee (IAC), led by Charles Fellows, did intensive work on securing a permanent investment management group.

Beth thanked the out-going Vestry members for their hard work and dedication: Kathryn Albertson, Andrew Cole, Larry Kissel, Amanda Rasche and Matt Solomon.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Jeff Brokamp of the nominating committee presented the slate of nominees for chairperson, Andrea Rogers.

Vestry (4 year terms):

- Iván Delgado
- Mark Kroeger
- Katy Mallon
- Ellen Reister
- Bill Weathers

Office Nominees

- Tom Kirkwood, Nominee for Trustee of the Redeemer Permanent Property (2025-2026 filling Bill Culp's remaining term)
- C.H. Maguire, Nominee for Trustee of the Redeemer Permanent Property (2025-2027)
- Ed Polanski, Nominee for Member-at-Large of the Redeemer Mission Funding Committee (2025-2027)

- Maria Cole, Nominee for Member-at-Large of the Redeemer Mission Funding Committee (2025-2027)
- Todd Schwartz, Alternate Delegate to 2025 Diocesan Convention; Delegate 2026 and 2027
- April Cain, Alternate Delegate to 2025 Diocesan Convention; Delegate 2026 and 2027

Jeff asked for a motion to close the nominations and cast a ballot for the entire slate. Mike Hardy made the motion and Betsy Schram seconded. The motion was unanimously approved. Jeff congratulated the new candidates, thanked the Nominating Committee (Kathryn Albertson, Amanda Rasche, Phil Smith, 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 2024. He thanked Kelly Schleker, Assistant Treasurer and Debbi Alsfelder, Financial Officer, for their work. He stated that there was a modest shortfall in 2024 however, there was also a gain of 25 new pledge units and return on investments increased. In 2025, most of the cost of the new priest-in-residence will be absorbed by the Diocese. When asked what will be done with the surplus, he explained that much of it is held for other groups and that 3 months' worth of salary/benefits are always kept on hand.

RECTOR'S REMARKS

Phil stated that the focus in 2025 will be on Mission and Outreach. He recognized two parishioners who are stepping away from their long-held positions in lay leadership: Tom Hill, leader of the Lay Readers and Larry Kissel from Head of Ushers and from Mission Board. He also explained that the Website provider we had been using went out-of-business, so our online presence is in flux.

Phil offered a closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 10:49 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Patricia Kovach, Clerk of Vestry

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

2025 Vestry of the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer

Beth Weinwuth, *Senior Warden*, Mark Sessler, *Junior Warden*,
Carter Kemper, *Treasurer*, Kelly Schleker, *Assistant Treasurer*,

Patricia Kovach, *Clerk of the Vestry*

Mark Kroeger	Katy Mallon	Elizabeth Coley
David Haffner	Ellen Reister	Bain Massey
Bill Weathers	Ivan Delgado-Velazquez	Cynthia Walker
	Steve Zimmerman	

