



LIBERATION SUNDAY

LIBERATION (PRIDE) SUNDAY – June 28, 2026 at 9:30 a.m.

PRELUDE “Prelude and Fugue in G Minor” - J.S. Bach

INTROIT “Tear Down the Walls” by Bob Demmert*

*Tear down the walls that divide us.
Unbind the chains that confine us.
Remove the labels that define us,
The fear that undermines us.
All people, all people,
All God’s people are welcome in this place.*

HYMN Christ Will Come Again (NCH 608)

1 Christ will come again,
God's justice to complete,
to reap the fields of time
and sift the weeds from wheat:
then let us passionately care
for peace and justice here on earth,
and evil's rage restrain with love,
till Christ shall come again.

2 Christ will come again
and life shall be complete.
The waters from the throne
shall wash the nations' feet:
then let us passionately care
for health and wholeness here on earth,
and ease our neighbors pain with love,
till Christ shall come again..

3 Christ will come again,
and joy shall be complete
as flames of lightning love
bedeck the judgment seal:
then let us passionately share
the whole great gospel here on earth,
until all things attain their end,
when Christ shall come again.

THE GREETING

When Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI) people feared to proclaim who we are and whom we love, you called Harvey Milk to lead us to dignity and hope.

Come and stand with us.

When the lives, agency and dignity of *all* women – both lesbian and straight – were disrespected by our society, you called Audre Lord to witness for us against the oppression of patriarchy.

Come and stand with us.

When both religious and secular communities attempted to shame us into the closet and run from who we are, you called Pauli Murray to advocate and proclaim God's never ending love for all of God's creation.

Come and stand with us.

When the lives of LGBTQ+ people were crushed by homophobia – internal as well as external - you called organizations such as Integrity, OASIS, Claiming the Blessing, TransEpiscopal and Dignity/USA to minister to your children.

Come and stand with us.

When black and LGBTQ+ people were targeted by the criminal justice system, the Rev. Frederick Davie took leadership of the Civilian Complaint Review Board of New York.

Come and stand with us.

When our long-term committed relationships were treated as less than any others by our society, its institutions and our churches, you called Edie Windsor to make the case for the dignity and sanctity of our lives and families.

Come and stand with us.

To act in the cause of human rights is a simple matter of justice. With all people everywhere, who are told that they are not “good enough” simply because of who God created them to be, we stand in solidarity, naming the oppression and hearing the call of God to overcome it.

Come and stand with us.

The Grace of Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you

Also with you.

HYMN OF PRAISE O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing (NCH 42)

1 O for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer's praise,
The glories ever echoing
the triumphs of God's grace!

2 My gracious Savior and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad
the honors of your name.

3 Jesus! the name that calms our fears,
that bids our sorrows cease
Is music in the sinner's ears,
is life, and health, and peace!

4 Glory to God, and love and praise
be ever, ever given
By all the saints in every age,
the church in earth and heaven.

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

God is with you.
And also with you.
Let us pray.

Fire-born God, before the violence of your passion no separating can stand: may your unseen Spirit pour herself upon young and old, male and female, gay, bi-sexual, lesbian, transgender, non-binary and straight throw our borders into confusion and give us a new language of love; through Jesus Christ, the Image of God's Being. **Amen.**

READINGS

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles (8:26-39)

An angel of God spoke to Philip and said, “Be ready to set out at noon along the road that goes to Gaza, the desert road.” So Philip began his journey. It happened that an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official in charge of the entire treasury of Candace, the ruler of Ethiopia, had come to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage and was returning home. He was sitting in his carriage and reading the prophet Isaiah. The Spirit said to Philip, “Go up and meet that carriage.” When Philip ran up, he heard the eunuch reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” “How can I,” the eunuch replied, “unless someone explains it to me?” With that, he invited Philip to get in the carriage with him. This was the passage of scripture being read: “You are like a sheep being led to slaughter, you are like a lamb that is mute in front of its shearers: like them, you never open your mouth. “You have been humiliated and have no one to defend you. Who will ever talk about your descendants, since your life on earth has been cut short?” The eunuch said to Philip, “Tell me, if you will, about whom the prophet is talking—himself or someone else?” So Philip proceeded to explain the Good News about Jesus to him. Further along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look, there is some water right there. Is there anything to keep me from being baptized?” He ordered the carriage to stop; then Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came out of the water, the Spirit of God snatched Philip away; the eunuch didn’t see him anymore, and went on his way rejoicing.”

After each reading, the people respond, **Thanks be to God**

Our Contemporary Reading is from “At Home in the World: A Rule of Life for the Rest of Us”, by Margaret Guenther

My meanderings through the dictionary, a favorite activity during attacks of procrastination, have taught me about the complex and unsentimental nature of our care for the stranger: the words “Host,” “guest,” “hostile”, “hostage,” “Hospital,” and “hospitality” all spring from the same Latin root *hostis*,* meaning stranger or enemy. To extend hospitality means widening the circle temporarily, perhaps taking a risk. Our generosity may be rejected, and we certainly dare not hope for thanks or reimbursement. To offer hospitality is an obligation. There is nothing soft or mushy about it. It has nothing to do with artificial standards of behavior.

The people respond to the reading

Thanks be to God.

SOLO

“What Have You Taught,” by Bob Demmert*

**Robert Demmert, a former Music Director of Redeemer, wrote the words and music to this song after over-hearing comments of open homophobia in a restaurant. It was a fast food restaurant where a family with children was sitting close by. The father made loud comments that all could hear about “fag this and fag that.”*

Bob was angry and deeply upset at the young children having to hear all of this hate. Bob was tempted to go over and say something to the father. But he decided that was not wise because Bob was not sure he would be able to control himself.

What Bob did in response to this situation was to go home and write this song which we sing every Liberation Sunday.

ALLELUIA



Soloist We praise you, O God, for this universe,
its wondrous beauty, rich and diverse.
Open our hearts that we may find
your glorious tapestry of humankind.
Let your will be known to us.

GOSPEL

Matthew 10:40-42

“Those who welcome you also welcome me, and those who welcome me welcome the One who sent me. “Those who welcome prophets just because they are prophets will receive the reward reserved for the prophets themselves; those who welcome holy people just because they are holy will receive the reward of the holy ones. “The truth is, whoever gives a cup of cold water to one of these lowly ones just for being a disciple will not lack a reward.”

Response before the Gospel

Glory to you, O Christ.

Response following the Gospel

Praise to you, O Christ.

ALLELUIA



Soloist Guard us safe from shame and guilt
by bound'ries that others have built
Let all your teachings set us free
That we may true disciples be
Let your will, your will be known to us

REFLECTION

THE CREED

We be - lieve in God all - lov - ing Au - thor of all
things that be, Mak - er of the earth and heav - ens,
Keep - er of the sky and sea. We be - lieve in
God's son, Je - sus, now for us the gift of light, and the Spir - it
ev - er - pre - sent, bring - er of a - bun - dant life.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

As we celebrate this Pride Sunday, we give thanks for all those Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer, and Gender non-conforming saints who have enriched our world and made us who we are. We pause to name them aloud, in the chat, or in the silence of our hearts.

(The leader will pause for the people to name our LGBTQ+ saints and heroes.)

And too, we know that this day comes at great cost. We remember before God and this community all whose lives have been cut short by hate crimes, violence and oppression. We name them now aloud, in the chat, or in the silence of our hearts.

(The leader will pause for the people to name those who have died because of their sexuality.)

For all those who face social stigma because of their sexuality or gender identity,
May we be your accepting presence.

For the thousands of LGBTQ+ runaways who have been rejected by their families,
May we be your saving presence.

For those whose lives are limited by their unwillingness to accept others,
May we be your liberating presence.

For all those who have the courage to celebrate their sexual identity,
May we be your rejoicing presence.

For those whose lives have been enriched by their ability to celebrate LGBTQ+ lives,
May we be your opening presence.

For those who work to achieve equality for all,
May we be your justice-loving presence.

At this time, we speak our concerns and thanksgivings for this parish and the world. We invite you to take this time to bring these to mind and speak them aloud, if you so choose.

The leader will leave a period of time for people to name their concerns and thanksgivings.

We now pray the specific concerns of this parish family....

Also, we pray our thanksgivings....

With these our prayers,

We proclaim and celebrate your love for all people, O God. Amen.

THE PEACE

Peace of Christ is always with you.

And also with you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERTORY

“Somewhere Over the Rainbow” – Henke/Donough
Krista Donough, soprano, and Chris Henke, piano

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

God is with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to our God.

Let us give thanks to our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

It is right to praise you, God of all creation;

In your love you made us for yourself,

When we turned away

you did not reject us,

but came to meet us in your Son.

You embraced us as your children

and welcomed us to sit and eat with you

In Christ you shared our life

that we might live in him and he in us.

Christ opened his arms in love.

On the night he was betrayed,

at supper with his friends

he took bread and gave you thanks;

he broke it and gave it to them saying:

Take eat; this is my body which is given for you;

do this in remembrance of me.

God, we do this in remembrance of him:

His body is the bread of life.

At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine,

He gave thanks, and said:

Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,

do this in remembrance of me.

God, we do this in remembrance of him:

This is the cup of blessing.

As we proclaim his death and celebrate his rising in glory,

Send your Holy Spirit that this bread and this wine

May be to us the body and blood of Jesus.

As we eat and drink these holy gifts

Make us one in Christ, our risen Lord.

With your whole Church throughout the world

We offer you this sacrifice of praise

And lift our voice to join the eternal hymn of heaven:



Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly One, God of pow - er and grace, Heav - en and
 9 earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is the
 17 One who comes in the name of our God. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Through Christ, yesterday, today, and tomorrow, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, honor and glory is yours, Ever-present God, now and forever.



A - men, A - men, A - men.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Before Jesus's mortal death, he taught us and we are bold to pray in whatever language or form that brings us closer to God,

**Our Mother, our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
 Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread.
 And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
 For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
 for ever and ever. Amen.**

FRACTION

We break this bread to share in the Body of Christ.
We who are many are one body, for we all share in the one bread

THE INVITATION

This is Christ's table where all are welcome, all are fed.
 Come, all who hunger for a deeper faith, a better life, a fairer world.

COMMUNION HYMN Be Known to Us in Breaking Bread (NCH 342)

1 Be known to us in breaking bread,
 but do not then depart;
 O Savior, stay with us and spread
 your table in our heart.

2 Here share with us in love divine,
your body and your blood;
That living bread, that heavenly wine,
be our immortal food.

POSTCOMMUNION PRAYER

Embracing God, we thank you that in your great love you have fed us with the spiritual food of Jesus, and have given us a foretaste of your heavenly banquet. Grant that this meal we share may be to us both a comfort and a pledge of our inheritance in that realm where there is no death, neither sorrow nor crying, but the fullness of joy with all your saints; through Jesus our Christ. Amen.

BLESSING

HYMN We are Marching in the Light of God (NCH 526)

We are marching in the light of God, We are marching in the light of God.
We are praying...
We are singing...
We are praising...
We are living...
We are moving...

We are marching, we are marching, ooh,
We are marching in the light of God.
We are marching, we are marching, ooh,
We are marching in the light of God.

DISMISSAL

Friends, how good and pleasant it is to be together, encouraging and consoling, provoking and inspiring. But now the service is ended — and now the wider service begins. Go in peace —
into the world, for the love of the world!

The Church of the Redeemer. Since the 1990s we have commemorated certain events with special services. These include: Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday, Recovery Sunday, Women's Journeys, Men's Journeys, Genocide and Holocaust Remembrance Sunday, Transgender Day of Remembrance, and Liberation (Pride) Sunday.

In our opening greeting today we name just a few of the leaders of the LGBTQ+ movement on whose shoulders we stand. They include:

Harvey Milk – The first openly gay man elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors (1977). Always advocating that lesbian and gay people should be able to live openly and authentically, he was a major force in getting an anti-discrimination city ordinance in San Francisco. A U.S. postage stamp was issued in his honor in 2014.

Audre Lorde - Lorde (1934 – 1992) was an American writer, womanist, radical feminist, professor, philosopher and civil rights activist. She was a self-described "black, lesbian, feminist, socialist, mother, warrior, poet," who "dedicated both her life and her creative talent to confronting and addressing injustices of racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia."

Pauli Murray - Anna Pauline "Pauli" Murray (1910 – 1985) was an American civil rights activist, advocate, legal scholar and theorist, author and – later in life – an Episcopal priest. Murray's work influenced the civil rights movement and expanded legal protection for gender equality. Thurgood Marshall called Murray's 1950 book States' Laws on Race and Color, the "bible" of the civil rights movement.

Frederick Davie – Rev. Frederick Davie has served as chair of the Civilian Complaint Review Board of New York City since 2016. The CCRB is an agency established by the City of New York with civilian oversight of the New York City Police Department, the nation's largest municipal law enforcement agency. With a staff of 200 and a board of 15 members, CCRB is the nation's largest independent civilian oversight agency of a police department.

Edie Windsor – Losing her wife and the love of her life, Thea Spyer, in 2009, Edie Windsor (1929 – 2017) filed a case in New York district court (2010) claiming that Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) discriminated against same-sex spouses. On June 26, 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court declared Section 3 of DOMA unconstitutional in a 5-4 decision. *United States vs. Windsor* became a landmark moment on the road towards marriage equality in our nation.

FROM REV. WILLIE J. SMITH - JUNE 28, 2026



The Trinity -Icon by Andrei Rublev

The Trinity -Icon by Andrei Rublev

During the month of June, I have written about the encounter that Abram and Sarai had with the 3 visitors who came with a promise and a blessing.

There are many renditions of this icon but I like this particular one. There are many symbols in the icon about the Trinity and the influence in creation, our life and the church.

But the item that grabs my attention is the cup(chalice) on the table. If you notice the hands of the 3 figures, they are pointing towards it. One of the many interpretations is that Trinity is contemplating the viewer. What does it mean for the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier to contemplate you and me? My guess is this is an ongoing process-what a gift!!!

Contemplating us and with us in the mundane, the everyday, every season, night and day a promise and a blessing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

* **The Serendipity Stitches** welcome you. 1st and 3rd **Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m. July 7 and July 21.** Our gatherings are always full of laughter, delicious treats, and plenty of good company. No experience necessary. Please get in touch with Veronica for more information.

*** The Book Group meets online at 7pm:**


6/29 Theo of Golden - Allen Levi

A story of giving and receiving, of seeing and being seen, Theo of Golden is an unforgettable novel about the power of generosity, the importance of connection, and the quiet miracles that happen when we choose kindness and wonder.

7/27 The Heart Goes Last - Margaret Atwood

8/31 There are Rivers in the Sky - Elif Shafak

Please support your local bookshop and Redeemer by ordering from our online Bookshop. <https://bookshop.org/shop/Redeemer>

***Earth Ministry & Environmental Sustainability**  **Happy Pride!** All of God's creation is full of diversity and beauty, and this connects with Pride so well. In fact, our home planet has so much diversity in relationships, gender, and expressions, It's amazing! We each reflect a part of the Creator. In honor of Pride celebration this week and month, I hope to invoke some awe and wonder in the natural world, and invite you to take a look at this documentary trailer from Queer Planet: <https://tinyurl.com/5afy6ukc> If you are interested in learning more, look up the book *How the Animals Do It*: <https://tinyurl.com/3yaf4suv>
Practice ecofriendly ways for Independence day celebrations, on <https://tinyurl.com/mryknxmj>

Garden of Hope: Flowers are starting to bloom, signaling that our vegetables are beginning to grow. Butterflies and bees are already visiting the garden! Come see the beauty and life happening with us outside in the Food Security Ministry

Keep updated with all that is going on at Redeemer

Visit our website: <https://redeemermorristown.org/> for further information and to sign up for our newsletter.

Please "like" and check out our Facebook page at <http://bit.ly/FBchurch> or follow us on Instagram - @RedeemerMorristown - <http://bit.ly/Instachurch>.

We are now on BlueSky -@redeemermorristown.bsky.social , <https://bit.ly/RedeemerBSKY>



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CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER
CELEBRATING LOVE & DOING JUSTICE.