

The background is an abstract composition of various colors including shades of blue, green, purple, pink, and orange. The colors are layered and textured, giving it a painterly or watercolor-like appearance. A single, faint heart shape is visible in the lower-left quadrant, partially obscured by the other colors.

The Season of Sacred Story



PRAYING TOGETHER, SEASON OF SACRED STORY V

PRELUDE Tocatta and Fugue in F - J. S. Bach

HYMN We are His Witnesses

LOBE DEN HERREN 14.14.4.7.8 ("Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty")

“We are his witnesses,” Peter proclaimed in his preaching.
“We learned the message of Christ through his serving and teaching.
Jesus is God! He went around doing good.
In all he did, God was with him.”

“We are his witnesses: Christ who was dead is now risen!
God raised him up on the third day from death's dreary prison.
Now we proclaim: All can have life in his name.
We have been freed and forgiven.”

We in the church have a message beyond all comparing:
Christ is alive and brings life to the lost and despairing.
He takes our sins! Easter assures us God wins!
Ours is the good news for sharing.

Tune: Erneuerten Gesangbuch, Stralsund, 1665 ("Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty")
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THE SEASON OF SACRED STORY GREETING

O God of every now and every then,
We pause to praise you for all the moments of our lives.

We praise you for the holy moments, remembered in story, that strengthen our faith.
We each have a story and our story has power.

We praise you for the aching moments, remembered in story, from which we learn.
We each have a story and our story has power.

We praise you for the extraordinary moments, remembered in story, that call us to
our better selves.
We each have a story and our story has power.

We praise you for every moment
and the beauty of stories that draw us closer to you.

THE COLLECT

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

God, creator of all, we bless you for the courage and humor of Charles Schultz who opened the hearts of people to a deeper understanding of acceptance. Strengthen us to speak on behalf of those who are marginalized because of their race, ethnicity or any other human constraint, continuing in the way of Jesus Christ our Liberator; who with you and the Holy Spirit dwells in glory everlasting. **Amen**

PSALM 145:8-9, 15-21 (NIV) *Presider & congregation read aloud together*

God is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. God is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. God is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does. God is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them. God watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy. My mouth will speak in praise of God. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.

THE SACRED STORY

A reading taken excerpts from Martin Luther King, Jr.'s I Have A Dream speech, August 28, 1963, Lincoln Memorial

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew

The people respond to each reading

Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe in God, who creates all things, who embraces all things, who celebrates all things, who is present in every part of the fabric of creation.

We believe in God as the source of all life, who baptizes this planet with living water.

We believe in Jesus Christ, the suffering one, the poor one, the malnourished one, the climate refugee, who loves and cares for this world and who suffers with it. And we believe in Jesus Christ, the seed of life, who came to reconcile and renew this world and everything in it.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the breath of God, who moves with God and who moves among and with us today.

We believe in everlasting life in God. And we believe in the hope that one day God will put an end to death and all destructive forces. I believe in life eternal, in which no one will be foreigner but all will be citizens of the kingdom where God reigns forever and ever. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God of love, you are with us in every transition and change. We thank you for the gifts, talents and skills with which you have blessed us. We thank you for the experiences that have brought us to this moment. We thank you for the work of others that gives breadth

and depth to our own work. Be with us as we move forward, rejoicing with you and supporting one another.

God of mercy, God of peace, hear our prayer.

Grant us the courage to hear your call to engage in the personal and communal work of dismantling racism through deep listening, reflection, and action as a call to justice for all God's people.

Suffering God, disturb us.

We pray for relief from the ongoing scourge of gun violence. We pray for those who have died and those who have been wounded. We pray for our legislators, that they would look beyond their self-interests.

Sophia God, compel us to change.

We pray for all children, parents, faculty and staff as they seek to create a safe learning environment. May their hearts, bodies and minds be nourished as they record their own stories within this living history.

Creator God, guide us.

We pray for all those pushed to the margins facing food shortages, housing uncertainties, or lack of access to health care or mental health care. We pray for all who live in fear.

Tender God, hold us.

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

The leaders will leave a period of time for the people to name their concerns silently, aloud or in the chat.

Help us create new stories that reflect the full inclusion of every human being.

Loving God, show us how to fully honor the rainbow of all humankind.

We now offer the thanksgivings of this parish family...

The leaders will leave a period of time for the people to name their thanksgivings silently, aloud or in the chat.

O God, you have created the wondrous diversity of our lives: hear our prayers and help us to walk humbly with you.

May our story grow as one of justice, strength and dignity for all. Amen.

THE PEACE

Peace of Christ is always with you.

And also with you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERTORY

"Above All" - arr. Mark Hayes

Krista Donough, soprano Chris Henke, piano

THE LORD'S PRAYER Pray in the language and version that brings you closest to the Creator.

CLOSING PRAYER

God revealed in the strangers approach and the bread of hospitality, in the message of new life and the laughter of response. Thank you for disordering our boundaries and releasing our desires in this feast of delight: draw us out of hidden places and centers of conformity to feel your laughter and live your pleasure. AMEN

HYMN Guided by the Holy Spirit

NETTLETON 8.7.8.7 D ("Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing")

Guided by the Holy Spirit
Paul and two friends crossed the sea.
So the church began in Europe
as they shared faith joyfully.
It all started with a vision;
Paul had had a vivid dream:
"Come and help us," some man told him...
But were things there as they seemed?
Macedonia was calling;
those three Christians traveled there.
On the Sabbath, they saw women
by the river offering prayer.
One strong leader there was Lydia.
Soon she asked to be baptized.
In her home a church was started,
and it changed so many lives.
Paul knew who he was expecting;
In his vision was a man.
Yet the ones who heard were women,
for God had a different plan.
May we welcome the outsider
In the work of ministry.
Savior, open our hearts wider
to the church we're called to be.

Tune: John Wyeth's *Repository of Sacred Music*, 1813 ("Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing")

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DISMISSAL

Friends, how good and pleasant it is to be together, hearing the stories of the saints among us. But now the service is ended — and now the wider service begins. Go in peace —
into the world, for the love of the world!

POSTLUDE "E Minor Tocatta" - Pachelbel

Season of Sacred Story is a new experience for me. I have enjoyed learning the roots of this through the various stories of why it exists. These stories vary, just like the person who shares the reason for the season. The best part is that the season is alive and well at the Church of the Redeemer.

Storytelling is the basis of the written word for each book of the Bible. Throughout the centuries, literacy has not been as uniform as it is today. The first books of the Bible were written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. The first uniform translation into a common language was the Vulgate version of the Bible, written in Latin. Storytelling varies with each person who shares the tale. Each translation of the written word has different, yet similar, definitions. The variations are similar to what we experience in different dialects. The gracious Southern drawl of Virginia and the Carolinas was brought back to me during my recent excursion to visit friends in Winston-Salem and Durham.

The joy of listening to and learning about the sacred stories told at the Church of the Redeemer is that they are not just about famous names; in many cases, they are about people just like you and me. One of my favorite hymns epitomizes what we share in Sacred Story:

I Sing a Song of the Saints of God

Written by Lesbia Scott

"I sing a song of the saints of God,
patient and brave and true,
who toiled and fought and lived and died
for the Faith they loved and knew.
And one was a doctor, and one was a queen,
and one was a shepherdess on the green;
they were all of them saints of God, and I mean,
God helping, to be one too.
They loved their Faith so dear, so dear,
and God's love made them strong,
and they followed the right for Jesus' sake,
the whole of their good lives long.
And one was a soldier, and one was a priest,
and one was slain by a fierce wild beast;
and there's not any reason, no, not the least,
why I shouldn't be one too.
They lived not only in ages past;
there are hundreds of thousands still.
The world is bright with the joyous saints
who love to do Jesus' will.

You can meet them in school, on the street, in the store,
in church, by the sea, in the house next door,
they are saints of God whether rich or poor,
and I mean to be one too."

I am grateful to have experienced this with all of you this year and give thanks for the stories each of you has shared with me about your life and experiences at the Church of the Redeemer. Each story is sacred and extremely personal, filled with Faith, Hope, and Love. These stories are the legacy upon which Redeemer has been built and will continue as you share them with friends, family, and strangers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

* **The Serendipity Stitchers** welcome you. 1st and 3rd **Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m. August 3rd & August 17th**. 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:**

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

9/28 - THE BOOK THIEF - Markus Zusak

10/26 - THE COUNTRY PEOPLE - Daniel Mason

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

***Earth Ministry & Environmental Sustainability** August is a time of harvest and abundance! We can celebrate the abundance of food we have in this area, and the country, and give thanks. On the flip side, we may or may not be aware of the over 100 billion pounds of food waste that occurs in this country and why that is a problem. I'm designating August to consider the different aspects of food waste. Did you know that it is of double concern? Food waste in landfills generate methane, which contributes to the global climate crisis. In addition, food waste is also a huge justice issue when thousands of people are food insecure. We have more than enough food to feed everyone, and it is good for us to practice wise stewardship as a matter of our faith in practice and concern for our food insecure siblings.

This week's theme is personal/family food waste. Mindfulness first!

- Check your supplies at home, eat before shopping, and plan your meals and shopping for only what you need. Practice self-control. Donate what you don't use.
- Check your local municipality for food waste compost pick up programs.
- Consider a home compost maker machine if you don't bring it to church or have your own compost at home.
- View <https://tinyurl.com/mrx6xp8f>
- Consider shopping at misfits (produce that is not perfect looking)

<https://tinyurl.com/y28mpkew>

***Garden of Hope:** We are happily donating back to the Table of Hope, and they have moved next door. This week we donated zucchinis, squash, and our first 2 tomatoes. It is good to have the gifts to offer fresh veggies to people who are food insecure. Peg can be reached at [pegonplanetearth\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:pegonplanetearth@gmail.com) or see her on Sundays. Thank you!



School Backpack Giveaway with the Table of Hope/CDC!

Each year we support families in need to help the children succeed in school with the supplies they need to start off the school year in a positive way. Madeleine is the point person and would love to see everyone contribute however big or small! Info is on Facebook's **Table of Hope** and on the flyer in the back of church. It's easy, with ways to contribute:

1. Visit Amazon for the Table of Hope's donation list, and contribute in that way.
2. Find your own school supplies and bring them to church to be collected and brought over to the Table of Hope/CDC.
3. A short term ministry! We need to have this done by 8/14. Thank you for helping our local students!
4. Any questions can be directed to Madeleine at ravenmatz79@gmail.com or see her on Sundays.

Keep updated with all that is going on at Redeemer

Visit our website: <https://redeermorristown.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 @redeermorristown.bsky.social , <https://bit.ly/RedeemerBSKY>



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