

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 IX

PRELUDE "Lobe Den Herren" - Kirnberger

HYMN Bring Many Names (NCH 11)

1 Bring many names, beautiful and good,
celebrate, in parable and story,
holiness in glory, living, loving God.
Hail and Hosanna! bring many names!

2 Strong mother God, working night and day,
planning all the wonders of creation,
setting each equation, genius at play:
Hail and Hosanna, strong mother God!

3 Warm father God, hugging every child,
feeling all the strains of human living,
caring and forgiving till we're reconciled:
Hail and Hosanna, warm father God!

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.

Passionate Lord, walking to Golgotha in the midst of our confusion: free us from our images of you which keep you enthroned in idle power, apart from the pain and sin of the world; lead us to embrace the scandal of the cross and let our violence die that greater life might rise; through Jesus Christ, who took the form of a slave. **Amen**

PSALM 26:1-8 *Presider & congregation read aloud together*

Do me justice, Yahweh!

For I have walked in integrity and I have trusted in you without wavering.

Search me, Yahweh, and test me; examine my heart and my mind.

For your love is before my eyes, and I walk in your truth.

I don't sit with deceitful people, nor do I consort with hypocrites.

I avoid places where troublemakers gather, and have nothing to do with violent people.

I wash my hands in innocence and minister at your altar, Yahweh, giving voice to my praise and recounting all your wondrous deeds. Yahweh, I love the house in which you dwell, the dwelling place of your glory.

THE SACRED STORY

A reading from the Book of Exodus

Our contemporary reading is "We Remember Jeanne Manford"

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. We 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

“Just A Closer Walk With Thee” - arr. Walters
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 Father Almighty Bless Us (NCH 518)

1 Father almighty, bless us with your blessing:
answer in love your children's supplication;
Hear now our prayer, the spoken and unspoken;
hear us, Eternal God.

2 Christ of compassion, carry all who seek you
to pastures green beside the peaceful waters;
Most tender guide, in ways of cheerful duty
lead us, good Shepherd.

3 Mother of mercy, from your watch and keeping
no space can part, nor hour of time remove us;
Give us your good, and save us from our evil,
Infinite Spirit.

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 “Nun Lasst Uns Gott” - Walther

The Home of the Hapless, Helpless and Hopeless

The story of an Episcopal Church

There was a church located in the County Seat, and it was founded by a group of Episcopalians who wished to worship in an inclusive congregation. There was a bigger, wealthier church on the main street; however, it carried all the trappings and allure of a restricted community.

The new church welcomed everyone to worship, and never offered the brown paper bag test. The congregation grew over the years, and with the growth, the spirit of a close-knit family prevailed. There was a point in time when a member of the congregation was diagnosed with a life-ending disease that affected gay men and drug users. The congregation supported the member and his family, offering a safe house for the people living with HIV AIDS.

This congregation opened their doors to people living with addiction, offering space for group meetings. It was said this church is the home of the Hapless, Helpless and Hopeless. When, in fact, this community was living the Gospel of Jesus.

Just opening doors and welcoming was not sufficient, and the congregation was the first to offer inclusive and nonpatriarchal language. The prayer Jesus taught was said: Our Mother, our Father in heaven... Same sex couples were offered blessings of their relationships in a sacred space. Ordained women were welcomed to preach, and you were fortunate to witness an ordination that invited the congregation to assist in laying hands on the ordinand.

The Rector of the church invited the laity to join in designing and planning the weekly worship. This work modeled mutual respect, building a stronger congregation. Recognizing the gifts of our fragile planet and creation was celebrated as a new season. The long season of green was augmented with a new addition that celebrated Sacred Stories. This congregation has been recognized throughout the greater Episcopal Church for innovation of worship while embracing an open inclusion of the sacred mystery of faith.

The church faced some hard times marked by a declining membership. A worldwide pandemic led to a suspension of in-person corporate worship. Clergy transition and personality disputes all converged as a perfect storm. Despite all of this, the faithful community is committed to embracing their faith and unique customs and worship. Yet the church is alive and full of promise.

The dedication of the faithful inspired a new period of growth built upon the foundations of a house of worship that welcomes all. Yes, that church may as well be the Church of the Redeemer. In fact, it is that church, and each of you has the ability and the God-given gifts to make this story a truth.

Redeemer is the church that welcomes all, including the successful and the hopeless. This is the church that has no secret handshake or unwritten code. People who share the peace on Sunday in church will share the peace whenever they meet you or see you. This is a community of believers that strives for justice not just in words but in actions.

I urge you all to embrace your heritage and celebrate your unique gifts and open doors wide. Go out into the world and share the love of our Redeemer with all whom you meet. May God continue to shine her love and grace on this parish family. **AMEN.**

Presented on Sunday, August 23, 2026, Church of the Redeemer
By The Reverend Deacon Erik Soldwedel

ANNOUNCEMENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

***Parish Picnic:** Join us on **Sunday, September 20th** for our parish picnic.

Be a part of...

- Dreaming dreams.
- Sharing hopes.
- Sharing stories.

Join us! As we envision what our future holds and we prepare to call our next Priest!

The service begins at **10:30 a.m.**, with the picnic to follow.

Redeemer will provide the sandwiches. Can you bring the sides?

Something like coleslaw, potato salad, fruit, or dessert.

And something to drink? Water, soda, etc.

There is a sign-up sheet at the back of the church. Or you can email the office.

*** The Serendipity Stitchers** welcome you. 1st and 3rd **Tuesdays** at **1:30 p.m.** 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 A dazzling feat of storytelling, *There Are Rivers in the Sky* entwines these outsiders with a single drop of water, which remanifests across the centuries. A source of life and harbinger of death, rivers—the Tigris and the Thames—transcend history, transcend fate: “Water remembers. It is humans who forget.”

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** Love your Leftovers & Restaurants for August *Abundance and Food Waste Awareness Month!*

Being responsible for the abundance we have been blessed with is a gift and challenge, along with seeing justice-making opportunities to be involved in. There is actually plenty of action to reduce food waste in restaurants that can happen, since it is money going down the drain. They include: contract composters, careful ordering, offering food waste to feed farmer's animals, and technology for measuring food waste to reduce it: it is now a part of wise business. A google search can reveal that.

First, develop your consciousness to be aware of how much food you buy, cook, and consume and look for ways to trim and use. Here are some tips when you end up with too much food at a restaurant and home:

A yellow poster for a Parish Picnic. At the top, it says "PARISH PICNIC" in large, bold, black letters. Below that, it says "JOIN US!" in bold, followed by "SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 20" in bold. To the right of this text are three small images: the first shows a sunset with the text "Live Your Vision", the second shows a sunset with the text "All the Hope We Carry", and the third shows a hot air balloon with the text "Dreams become reality". Below the text "JOIN US!", it says "Be a part of..." followed by a bulleted list: "• Dreaming dreams.", "• Sharing hopes.", and "• Sharing stories." Below the list, it says "Join us!" followed by "As we envision what our future holds and we prepare to call our next Priest!".

- Always ask for a doggie bag and then either eat the leftovers soon, or offer it to a street person who looks like they could use food on the way home.
- For catered events (weddings, funerals, etc.,) ask if you can donate the leftover unused food to a food pantry or shelter. Contact a non-profit organization ahead to make arrangements. Table of Hope, Interfaith Food Pantry, Market Street Mission, etc.
- NPR radio: Listen or read how to turn leftovers into creative meals: <https://tinyurl.com/4vj9ehzh>
- Great video plan on reducing food waste at home: <https://tinyurl.com/yjxb7dym>
- Options for compost that are unprocessed, vegan, and not carbs (no meat, fish, or dairy, but egg shells are ok): bring it to church for compost.
- Options for compost at home: MYO compost and the new home kitchen composters that do the job! (google it).
- Options for compost services by municipality: contact your town or google it.

Remember back to school supplies and lunches that are ecofriendly!

- Plan plastic-free and waste-free lunches with containers and train the children not to throw away the containers and put them back in the lunch box to bring home.

- <https://tinyurl.com/ztd7ymev>

The link correction from last week's column on the Food Recovery Network (colleges) is <https://tinyurl.com/2emrr4nj>

You can paddle, but can you steer a canoe? We have two Redeemerites interested in this nature adventure and skill learning opportunity! Who else wants to join? We would rent equipment for a couple of hours and Peg can instruct you, and we would have fun! Peg is a ACA certified canoe instructor and happy to share her knowledge. Interested in this not-too-strenuous activity? (You do not need to swim, we wear lifejackets.) Peg can be reached at [pegonplanetearth\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:pegonplanetearth(at)gmail.com) or see her on Sundays.

***Garden of Hope:** It is a delight this time of year to harvest the ripe tomatoes, zuccinis, cucumbers, basil, and string beans! We have much gratitude for those who have hearts and hands in the garden for this ministry of growing for our local food insecure siblings. It is also wonderful to be in the very full, green garden and watch butterflies and bees do their rounds, along with the hungry squirrels, although less desired. We continue to grow, harvest, and donate. Some samples may show up at coffee hour.

- We love the compost! Please continue! Thank you!

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>.

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