

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
OF THE REDEEMER
GREENSBORO, GA

REPORT FOR
ANNUAL MEETING
NOVEMBER 14, 2021



REACHING OUT · REACHING IN
REDEEMER

Rector's Report – Bill Combs

Twelve months have passed since our last Annual Meeting, and still the pandemic continues. Things have changed for the better – thanks be to God! Yet, one cannot reflect upon this past year without acknowledging that COVID-19 dictated much of our life together. Despite that prevalent shroud, our life together has been vigorous and robust. We have found a myriad of ways to experience the love of God alive in us, and to share that love with the world around us.

Worship: A Slow Return

As has been the case for almost everything in our nation's life, our worship this past year has been shaped by the activity of the coronavirus. At this point in 2020, we had just begun having in-person services outdoors. As it was cool-ish in November, we met in the Activity Center parking lot on Sunday afternoons, weather permitting. We were masked and distanced, and we were live-streaming on Facebook using my laptop! I was so struck by the heartiness of our participants, and the joy in being able to worship together again, even in such limited circumstances.

Our Sunday morning worship was only being viewed online a year ago. But beginning last November, we started to use the newly installed live-streaming equipment. The cost of this equipment was largely offset by the sales of beautiful crosses made from 150-year-old nails recovered during our renovation. The crosses were hand-made expertly by Everett Price. The new camera, sound-system, and computer systems have greatly enhanced our online offerings. When we were able to return to in-person services, we agreed to continue to offer the live-streaming. Over 100 online participants join us each week!

Indoor in-person gatherings resumed on Palm Sunday of this year, after the winter COVID surge had eased sufficiently. By Bishop Wright's directive, we were masked, spaced at least 6 feet apart, and were not permitted to sing or partake of the consecrated bread and wine. But we were together again in our beloved worship places! Because of the limited space on Sundays, we added a third service (at 11:00 a.m.) to accommodate our "crowds". And to enhance the musical experience, on Sundays we enlisted the assistance of "ringer singers". These were parishioners such as John Cawthon, Katie Price, Charlotte Mosteller, and Cindy Coker, who sang into a microphone in the sacristy so that the in-person and online congregations could hear the words as well as the tune of the hymns. We eventually "evolved" the Sunday 9:30 service to be for fully vaccinated folks (with fewer restrictions) and kept the 11:00 service for individuals who were not vaccinated or had other health concerns. All these changes were important in bridging us to the point where we could meet in person in a more or less "normal" way. Indeed, the restrictions slowly lifted, and by Trinity Sunday, the bishop had stepped back from diocesan directives, asking each vestry to follow the CDC guidelines for indoor gatherings in their county. In the early summer, this meant an easing even of mask-wearing mandates, although with the "Delta variant surge" the transmissions rates rose to a level where mask-wearing was again highly recommended. Over the last month, we have been able to ease those recommendations again, due to the sharp decline in transmissions in Greene and Putnam Counties.

I have gone into a somewhat detailed recounting of our worship journey with COVID, as it is a window into our larger life as a congregation functioning in the face of this pandemic. 2021 has been marked in no small part by this slow process of re-emerging into a more or less "normal" parish life together. We now once again have worship with singing, and coffee/refreshment hour, and Christian Education, and Outreach Meetings, and yoga, and a number of other parish events – much as in the "before-times." But we know that we are changed, enlarged, fuller, because of our

great efforts. And these efforts have been great indeed! We are more aware – and appreciative – of the gifts of God, and the fellowship we have with one another. In the face of this great adversity, we are emerging strong, faithful, and grateful.

Renovations and Innovations

Renovations – In the fall of last year, we began a large undertaking – the renovation of our sanctuary’s foundation, steeple, windows, and furnishings. Curtis Whitsel, who is a master at renovating historic buildings, was our contractor and undertook this work. The pews were removed, as was the flooring. The wooden beams and bricks that were the foundational support were replaced in a number of areas. The HVAC units were replaced, as was the underground ductwork. The flooring was replaced and refinished. The pews were lovingly refinished by Bill Sinke. The steeple had extensive renovation work done, including the beautiful stained-glass window. The woodwork behind the altar was restored as well. Each of the six clear windows were removed, completely restored at Curtis’ workshop, and reinstalled. Finally, the exterior received a much-needed renovation itself. All this work extended well into 2021, and was overseen by our Junior Warden, John Fox. John was present nearly every day while the majority of the work was being done, and we cannot thank John enough for his loving dedication to the well-being of Redeemer. John, we are most grateful!!!

A prominent concern for the vestry this year has been the status of the “Ice House” (which is the short extension of the Activity Center that runs perpendicular to the rest of the building). Most of us have never been in this part of the building, and it is in rough shape. We have used it for storage over the years, but it is continually leaking, and becoming structurally worrisome. Early in the year, many on our vestry (including me) were leaning towards demolishing that portion of the Activity Center, and rebuilding the walling that interfaces with the rest of the A/C. Unfortunately, to do so carries an expense well over \$40,000. More recently, after having the building inspected by a structural engineer, we have learned that it is extremely risky to attempt to demolish it due to the impact such an action might have on the parking lot and the remainder of the Activity Center. At this time, we are pursuing having the roof completely restored, and exploring possible uses for the building.

Another renovation/innovation for us involved a “step-rail” in the sanctuary. I have been deeply concerned about people safely navigating the steps up to the chancel, especially when no one else might be around. After toying with wrought-iron designs around the font, the vestry have concluded that a better – and less intrusive – option would be a simple wooden handrail located along the wall near the acolyte’s pew. We hope to have that installed soon.

The ongoing plan to create a fully-accessible sanctuary and a renovated Activity Center have been exceedingly difficult to move forward – largely due to the tremendous busyness of architects with whom we have been bidding. We are currently in conversations with an Athens-based architect, David Matheny, who is working on provisional plans.

Innovations – This has been a year of trying a great number of new ideas and projects:

- Ash Wednesday – this year I created a video of the process of creating the ashes for Ash Wednesday. We then offered “Drive-By Ashes” in Fred’s parking lot! We had roughly 30 people participate (even though I could not directly apply the ashes, due to COVID at the time), and we had a great time! We met folks we would not have before and are planning to continue to offer this in years to come.
- Soup and Sandwich Saturdays – while this is not a new program for us, it did see growth and innovation in the past year. We began to receive leftover produce from Second Harvest

(who has their food distribution earlier on the mornings of our Soup and Sandwich Saturdays). Then, a manager at Ripe Things began ordering specific fresh fruit and vegetables for our guests. In the summer, we were contacted by the First Presbyterian Church and the First United Methodist Church in Greensboro about joining with us, each taking a different Saturday of the month. Most recently, we have been in contacted by Second Harvest to explore ways of growing this ministry with the other area churches.

- Goodie Bags – Our Outreach and ECW groups got busy this year, making lovely goodie bags for housebound men and women in the Meals on Wheels program. They made these treat bags for both Valentine’s Day and Halloween. They also created sweet Mother’s Day goodie bags for the women in the Legacy nursing care facility.
- Greene County Coalition for the Homeless – Early in 2021 our Outreach committee was contacted by a group interested in forming a taskforce to address homelessness in Greene and surrounding counties. Cathy Crosby is our representative on this committee. We excited about this work in addressing the ever-increasing need for shelter in our community.
- Jean Reed Arbor – When Jean passed on in 2019, we received a number of financial gifts in her honor. After much prayerful thought and conversation with her family, the Circle of Love (a domestic violence shelter that was a passion of Jean’s) decided to create an outdoor arbor and gathering place in Jean’s honor. This space is just lovely, and exactly what the guests at the Circle of Love have needed!
- Walking Tour – Late in 2020 we were contacted by the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce about applying to be included in the Greensboro Walking Tour. Our application was accepted, and we are in the process of becoming officially on the tour!
- Parish Life – We have tried a few new things this year in our parish gatherings. We had a picnic at the Lake Oconee Lutheran Church (rain moved us from an adjacent field to their covered parking area!). And later in November we will have an Advent Wreath-Making Workshop. Our Parish Life committee is already thinking of more new ways we can connect in the upcoming year.
- Quilting – Our Quilting Guild continues to come up with new ways to bring joy to folks in our community. This past year they made quilts for the women and children at the Circle of Love. Then they made bibs for the newborn babies at First Response. They then made joyful bibs for the residents at Greenpoint Nursing Home, for use in their dining room. And in January they will be donating to the library a quilt honoring the role of quilt-makers in the Underground Railroad.
- Garden Bench and Seating Area – Liam Beckemeyer, nephew of Nancy Beckemeyer, created a lovely new seating area in our Memorial Garden as his Eagle Scout project. What a love addition to our already-beautiful gardens!
- Hybrid Connectivity – Finally, so many of our groups (Sunday worship, Christian Ed, Vestry, Yoga, etc.) have found ways to expand our inclusivity by offering opportunities for folks to join in gatherings both in-person and virtually. In many ways we are taking the good that the pandemic has brought with us as we go forward.
- Upscale Resale Returns – And boy, did it return! Thanks to the incredible work of Connie Karpinsky and nearly 30 other volunteers, the sale of gently used handbags, purses, and jewelry raised \$12,000 for the Greene and Putnam County Food Pantries.

Transitions

Transition is always going to be a part of our life together, but it is an especially prominent aspect of our parish right now.

In November of last year, one of our organists, Bill Goad, let us know of his intention to resign at the end of December. Almost immediately, and quite serendipitously, Dr. Hue Jang contacted us to ask if we might have a need for an organist/musician. Hue is the staff pianist and a professor of music at Georgia College. We happily welcomed Hue into our church in February, and she has been alternating with Jenny Moore beautifully. We are so glad to have Hue with us in our Redeemer family!

We lost several of our beloved members to death in the last twelve months. Our dear Joe Jordan passed on in December of last year, and Ed Goff died a month later. Just a week after Ed, our friend and florist Joel McRay passed on. Martha Cochran died a week after Easter Sunday. And Carol Hallauer passed on in June of this year. Finally, Karen Johnson died in July. So many of our dear family members left this earthly life in the last year. While we continue to grieve their passing, we are grateful always for the life and love they shared with us all.

We also have lost several members to relocation since our last Annual Meeting. Oscie and Carol Gordan have moved to Milledgeville, and Linda Disosway relocated to Texas. Jim and Karen Fleece moved to the Athens/Watkinsville area, and are attending a church there. Lisa and Jack Kearney began attending another area church during the pandemic, and are members there now. We are glad to continue to see and catch up with Lisa in shared area ministries.

In the past year we have added four new members officially. Brie Kelly transferred her membership early in 2021, and Mark and Beth Prosser transferred their membership during the summer. Cathy Crosby was received into the Episcopal Church in a convocation ceremony in Madison in June. Currently Jane Moss is in the process of having her membership transferred to Redeemer. In addition to these official (or almost official) new members, we have another dozen or more folks who are new to our parish, joining us for worship regularly, and participating in the life of Redeemer in multiple ways. On top of all of this, we also have somewhere between 80 and 120 folks every week who participate in our worship service via Facebook.

What Lies Ahead?

Without a doubt we are no longer the same church that entered the pandemic 20 months ago. As we look to 2022, we may feel a sense of “identity crisis.” With the departure of so many folks, and the addition of even more, what is the vision and mission for Redeemer that embraces us all? Are the driving concerns of 2019 still our passions today? What is God calling us into now?

Addressing these questions, I suspect, will be our work in the new year. Through our leadership and the all-important voices of every member and participant in the life of Redeemer, we need to articulate and lay claim to God’s purposes for us going forward. I suspect, as well, that somehow this will be a weaving together of renovation and innovation: the “retaking-up” of who we’ve been, integrated with new pathways and ministries that enable and enhance our Reaching Up, our Reaching Out, and our Reaching In.

I continue to thank God every day for the opportunity to serve you, and to walk humbly with you in our journey to live and love God. Thank you.

Senior Warden's Report – Ed Coleman

The year started out with COVID dominating the activities of the parish. In person worship was still not allowed but with the approval of vaccinations on the horizon there was light at the end of the tunnel. Early year activities involved planning for the eventual resumption of in person worship and enhancing the on line worship experience. Thanks to Everett Price a successful fundraiser was conducted to improve the audio/visual equipment for the sanctuary. The worship committee developed protocols for the eventual resumption of in person worship, and in the spring we began holding in person worship services in the church parking lot, and eventually returned to worship in the sanctuary on Palm Sunday.

Throughout the pandemic, the church outreach programs continued although on a modified basis. The Soup and Sandwich Saturday program continued to grow with 30-40 of our neighbors participating on a regular basis. Due to the generous memorial gifts in memory of Jean Reed we were able to provide enhancements to the Circle of Love's outdoor gathering area. The lady's quilting group was also able to provide beautiful quilts to the Circle of Love. And through donations to the Rector's discretionary fund, many people in need were helped. And last, but not least, our on line worship services were able to reach many who were not part of our congregation. In spite of the limitations of the pandemic we were able to fulfill our commitment to "Reaching Out".

In June, as pandemic restrictions began to be loosened, we held a Parish picnic at LOLC. A good time was had by all in attendance. On line worship in the form of Morning Prayer and Compline was provided five days a week during the height of the pandemic to meet the spiritual needs of the parish. And of course we continued to reach out to those in need within our parish with visits, meals and all the things we do so well. In short, we continued "Reaching In". The vestry also worked to develop plans for an expanded and more accessible activity center to meet the needs of our parish. And plans have been developed to correct structural issues with a portion of the current activity center. These will be addressed in a capital campaign to be rolled out hopefully in 2022.

In all, 2021 has been a challenging year, but with the commitment of your vestry and many others in the parish, I believe we have lived out our motto of Reaching Out, Reaching In.

Junior Warden Annual Report – John Fox

January

We started out the year with our stained glass window in the steeple installed with just two more windows in the sanctuary left to install. Our attention turned to the roofing leaks above the kitchen. We hired Al's Roofing to come do an emergency repair for \$1,600 dollars and asked them to price up the repairs to the Ice House roof. They came back with multiple options and Les suggested we get a structural engineer to look at the repairs. I also talked to Ben Carter about how long it would take him to prepare a set of Schematic set of drawings for the Activity Center. Ben said it would take him four to five weeks to prepare a set for presentation purposes.

February

I had a meeting set up with Ramon Ramos to look at the Ice House Roof and I was waiting on the delivery of the remaining windows for the Sanctuary. We did adjust the cleaning service fee due to the fact that we cut back on the frequency of their services

March

There were discussions regarding the type of handrail that would fit around the baptismal font and fit into the historical design of the building.

Rev Bill and I met with Ramon Ramos and he recommended that we tear it down. I proceeded to look for demolition contractors and asked Les if he would help me find some more contractors.

April

Rev. Bill was approached by Wilhoit Gas Company about leasing the metal building. I said I had some old pricing from a year ago but I thought that it would be a good idea to find out from Jim Hudson about rental rates for this type of space before I go any further to get bids on the work. There were additional discussions regarding the type of handrail that would fit into the historical design of the building. Les sent me a list of three more contractors who were out of town and as is most of the time, everyone is too busy or was not interested in traveling to Greensboro. I was also given the name of a local contractor name Lake Boys Renovation. I left them a message.

May

I did not attend this meeting because I was out of town but Rev Bill mentioned that we met with Wilhoit and they were interested so Rev Bill talked to Lang Lowery from the Diocese for his recommendation. I did receive a message from Les about a downed tree that fell across the powerline to the light pole in the lower parking lot. With Jim Hudson's help we got the tree cleaned up and a new line was run to the street light

June

I continued working with Lake Boy's Renovation and toured the Ice House with them and discussed the options on the tie-in to the existing activity center. On the 22nd of June I received a bid from Lake Boys Renovation for \$46,850.

July – No Meeting Scheduled

I continued trying to get back to Ben Carter and set up a meeting time with him and the vestry to discuss the Schematic Design. After numerous messages and discussions with his partner, I sent him an email saying that I thought that he was being inconsiderate for not responding to my phone calls and emails.

He finally got back with me and said that he didn't want me to contact him or his firm again. I reached out to Joseph Smith and he came over to the church and reviewed what we needed done. He said he would get back to me with a few other names of firms in the area,

August

I did get back one price for the renovation of metal building and it was \$61,000 dollars which surprised all of us. I also presented the cost to demolish the Ice House which was \$46,850 dollars. I thought it was competitive but there are too many unknowns with demolition.

Les offered to look for alternate roofing contractors and we all agreed

I did get in contact with one of the Architects that Joseph Smith recommended. We set up a meeting with David Matheny from Athens and he came to the church and met with Rev. Bill and myself. He said he would get back to us with some thoughts. My personal feeling was that his heart was not into it.

September

Les presented the two bids he received and we thought it would be a good idea to bring in another structural engineer and have them make a recommendation. We agreed to get Oconee Engineering to come evaluate the building and make a recommendation. Les and I met Ralph

and toured the building. He said he would try to get us the report before the October Vestry meeting.

We also received the second bid for the metal building and it was within \$1,000 dollars of the previous bid. It was determined that Rev Bill would contact Wilhoit to see if they are still interested in leasing the building.

October

Rev. Bill was contacted by Wilhoit and was told that they did not want to lease the building. We further discussed getting the power back on to see if we could possibly get some conditioned air in it. The HVAC units have not been running for years and both contractors felt that they need to be replaced. Nancy offered to get the powerlines cleared to see if Georgia Power would turn power back on. If the clearing happens we will get an electrical contractor and HVAC Contractor to inspect and monitor a start-up of the systems.

We received Oconee Engineering report and I recommended that Les provide the report to the two low bidders and have them incorporate the recommendations into their price.

Christian Education – Linda Chesbro

Adult Christian Education remained a central part of the ministry of Redeemer in spite of the challenges of the COVID epidemic. Father Bill refined the ZOOM process (time and again) when it was not possible to meet in person, and ZOOM continues to allow parishioners to participate when physical presence is a challenge.

Autumn 2020 classes included a study of the seven sacraments and a discussion of Holy Envy (book by Barbara Brown Taylor). The Book of Genesis was central to classes in January and February followed by The Way of Love in Lent in February and March. The Liturgy of the Ordinary provided the material for classes in April and May. Two Sundays in May were devoted to the creative process with presentations by Everett Price, Lisa Kearney and Ken Crosby. Summer Bible study followed.

Autumn 2021 brought the Cosmic Egg Theory of Richard Rohr and a study of Second Isaiah. November and December will feature Themes of Art in Advent, presenting different cultural depictions of the prophets and Mary, Mother of Jesus. Actual pieces of art and on screen presentations will be used. The Holy Orders will be studied in January and February. African-American Spirituals and Hymnody will be celebrated in February. In March and April we will review An Altar in the World by Barbara Brown Taylor. In April and May sacramental imagery will be featured in Feast in Film. The creative process part III will cover two Sundays in May, followed by summer Bible study.

The Saturday Christian Education classes at LOLC have been temporarily suspended as regular attendees have been unable to be present. These classes will resume once the threat of COVID has lessened.

Redeemer Yoga is currently meeting in person and on ZOOM, classes beginning with prayer, Scripture or poetry and following with yoga poses that are appropriate for all levels. Music and resting bring the hour to a close.

Centering Prayer meets twice a week currently, nurturing a quiet, contemplative relationship with God in order to hear his words for us.

Living Gracefully meets weekly via ZOOM. Book discussions are held on the second and fourth Wednesdays. Robert Fulghum's sermons-turned-essays have provided humorous material. Alternate Wednesdays center on reflections from the past and intentional living for the future.

The group hopes to return to in-person meetings and will discuss Fulghum's What on Earth have I Done?

Finally, Faith Allies for Racial Equity, have been meeting frequently throughout the year, exploring issues of race and justice in our community and in our nation.

Communications – Mimi Vickers and Nancy Beckemeyer

With Outreach at the heart of Redeemer, communicating to others our various events and fundraisers becomes an important function and a good way to raise awareness of our little church and all we do within the greater community.

To that end, this year we were able to promote through the various newspapers and with signs and banners the monthly Soup and Sandwich events, dedication of the Jean Reed pavilion at Circle of Love, Upscale Resale, our Ash Wednesday drive-by for ashes and Bless the Animals weekend.

Thanks to all who participated in these events.

Outreach – Sharon Bryan

It has been a busy year for Redeemer's Outreach ministry. We have assisted 16 individuals with rent, utilities or shelter.

We have also given monetary donations to the following organizations: Greene County Habitat for Humanity, Putnam County Habitat for Humanity, Pete Nance Boys & Girls Club, General Theological Seminary (Father Bill's seminary of choice this year), GA College & State University Music Dept.(for scholarship program), and the Redeemer Quilters Guild.

We organized a number of Outreach projects to help our community.

--With the donations made in memory of our beloved Jean Reed, an outdoor space/pavilion was constructed at Circle of Love. A dedication service was held in August with Jean's family in attendance.

--Our Redeemer Quilters Guild was busy this year making quilts and bibs for Circle of Love, Head Start, and nursing homes.

--For Valentine's Day, volunteers put together goody bags for the recipients of Meals on Wheels in Greene County. Each individual received a special treat bag that week along with their meal.

--At Easter we provided food and Easter Baskets for 5 families. This year volunteers put together baskets for 19 children, a record number!

--For Mother's Day, volunteers put together 25 goody bags for the ladies who reside at the Boswell-Parker Health & Rehabilitation nursing home in Greensboro.

--In August we collected school supplies for the Greene County Family Connection Commission to use to stuff book bags for students at the schools.

--In September Connie Karpinsky organized another very successful Upscale Resale event. The Half-Price sale was held in November and was also successful. All of the money made will be split equally between the Greene County and Putnam County Food Pantries.

--In October volunteers put together Halloween treat bags for the recipients of Meals on Wheels in Greene County. We provided over 75 bags for these senior citizens.

--In November volunteers provided and served lunch to the crew of the Greene County Habitat for Humanity at the building site in Union Point.

--Cash Calendars will be available in November. Redeemer has partnered with the Lake Oconee Youth Alliance this year. The money that we make will go to our Outreach Fund.

--For Thanksgiving we will sponsor 5 families and provide a turkey and all the trimmings, as well as food for a week.

--For Christmas we will sponsor 5 families and provide Christmas dinner, as well as food for a week. We will also be asking parishioners to purchase gifts for the children in each family. We'll have a Christmas tree set up in the Activity Center with the children's names & their wish lists.

--Our Soup & Sandwich Saturday ministry continues to be successful. We average giving out between 40-45 lunches each month. Jenny Moore is serving as the coordinator of SSS.

--The Greene County Homeless Coalition is a newly formed organization in our community. This group is working on ways to address the issue of homelessness in the area. Cathy Crosby is Redeemer's representative at their monthly meetings.

Our church is blessed with such a loving, caring and generous congregation. Thank you all for everything you do to support our Outreach ministry.

Parish Life Annual Report – Christine Young

As we were slowly coming out of 2020, 2021 presented its own set of challenges with ever-changing church regulations and CDC recommendations. Nonetheless, Parish Life sponsored/coordinated the following activities

- “Bacon” Me Crazy BYOB Pancake Supper – via Zoom
- Annual Parish Picnic
- Re-emergence of after service social hours
- 1 Funeral Service (Carol Hallauer)
- Festive Social Hour after Annual Meeting
- Advent Wreath Making Workshop

The Parish Life Committee (Ken Crosby, Ann Goff, Pat Chapman, Amy Schneider, and Christine Young) met at the end of October to discuss various activities/events for 2022. Several new ideas and tweaks on traditional ideas were discussed. Alice Stollenmeyer has agreed to coordinate the 2022 Foyers group. Be on the lookout for the announcements and sign-up sheets in January.

A big thank you to all who assisted in coordinating and participated in this past year's events.

Stewardship – Everett Price

This report has been written and submitted by Everett Price, vestry liaison to the stewardship committee in 2021.

First, my thanks to Stan Mileski, Len Scullion and Jim Borland, for being such good counsel to me and each other on this committee and their many efforts in our parish, in various service duties. They are truly a team that helps the parish Reach In and Reach Out.

Although the remnants of COVID and have curtailed our number of meetings, the committee's activities were not curtailed very much compared to 2019. To adjust, we made the most of our communications abilities through e-mail, text and phone conversations.

The committee produced letters that accompanied the mid-year pledge statements and just finished the 2022 campaign package that includes a letter on our campaign, Time and Talent Opportunity Sheet and the 2022 pledge card.

Our plans in November and to close out the year are to do required follow-up on the campaign mailing to assist anyone needing any kind of help in this part of their spiritual journey and their response.

This report is submitted for the consideration of the parish on and after October 25, 2020.