

the *Kerygma*



NEWSLETTER OF REDEEMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Most people in our church have lives that are like a stool with three legs.

They have their spiritual life, their professional life, and their family

life. If one of these legs wobbles, they have two others they can lean on.

For pastors, those three things can merge into one leg.

When you sit on a one-legged stool, it takes a lot more concentration and energy.

—Pastors’ Summit Conference Participant

Like Sunday, but Longer

Resting well in order to work well has been a big theme in the news lately due to the re-examined time-off requirements for air traffic controllers. We could all ask ourselves, “What kind of rest will allow me to do the job I am called to do in the way I am called to do it?” For pastors, part of that answer is found in the practice of taking sabbatical. As Redeemer approaches its 10th year of meeting, the session wholeheartedly agreed that this was the time for the Gibbs family to take a good long rest in preparation for the years of ministry to come. I sat down with Tom to ask him some questions about his upcoming months. Over the course of our interview, and my perusal of Redeemer’s (and other churches’) sabbatical policy, I was able to understand what makes a sabbatical 1) different from a vacation, 2) important at this point in our church.

It is a Biblical Idea

Ceasing- A pattern of work and rest is built into God’s design for our world—not only in the seven-day week, but also in longer cycles. While we are all called to one Sabbath day per week, in the Old Testament, farmers were instructed to let their fields rest every seventh year (Lev. 25). The farmer’s rest matched the soil’s rest, because he has to work when the soil works. In the “off years” he had to trust God, and not his own efforts, to provide enough food for his livelihood. God did not design the world or its inhabitants to perpetually produce, and different creatures have different patterns. The pattern for those in ministry depends on the unique needs and characteristics of their congregation. In 2008 the session of Redeemer anticipated the various dynamics and needs of our growing congregation and developed a sabbatical policy for our ministers. After five years of full-time service, a minister is eligible for up to three months of sabbatical. It’s been longer than five years, and the session was enthusiastically supportive of Tom’s desire to take three months away from San Antonio to rest in a way that is unique to his work.

“The sabbatical is not intended to be an escape from ministry. It is a time of refreshment and reflection.”

Renewal- change of pace

A sabbatical does share some qualities with vacation (though not necessarily one of those vacations where the family manages to see five National Parks in seven days, or all of Disney World and Universal Studios in a weekend). A vacation removes us from the “daily grind.” It allows us to go to a place where our responsibility,

focus, and schedule are different from home. It is a time to hit the reset button on priorities that should not be dictated by deadlines and to-do lists. Sometimes we need to hold down the reset button a little longer. The more systems that need refreshment, the longer the rest needs to be. When I asked Tom what he hoped to get out of the time away, he said, “I want to get back into a healthy rhythm with my family and personal devotion...[and I want to] seek counsel and get

input from others who are ahead of me in ministry.” “When you put it like that,” I thought, “take as long as you need.”

It is a Practical Idea

Perspective- Restoring healthy cycles brings up an often unasked question: is our pastor in an *unhealthy* cycle of personal devotion and family life? Many are surprised to hear that in most cases, not just at Redeemer, the answer is “inevitably.” “Most people in our church have lives that are like a stool with three legs. They have their spiritual life, their professional life, and their family life. If one of these legs wobbles, they have two others they can lean on. For pastors, those three things can merge into one leg. When you sit on a one-legged stool, it takes a lot more concentration and energy.”

—Pastors’ Summit Conference Participant
In addition to human crises, which come with the territory, weekly sermons keep on coming, and the church is a non-profit organization that needs managing. Between the forms and spreadsheets, no one is asking, “Tom, have you spent time in God’s

Book Review

By Neevia Eggar

A Children's Book; Not Just for Kids

This is supposed to be a book review. As I sat down to write a review of this particular book, I couldn't decide where to start. The book I want to talk about has so dramatically impacted my life that I could start at any number of places and I wanted to be sure I chose one that would grab your attention. So, how about this:

"The truest thing about you is that you are 'in Christ'."

"Heady" statement, right? In reformed circles, we are so often afraid to admit that we don't really understand statements such as this. So we leave it out there lurking above our heads and far from taking root in our hearts. The fact that I am 'in Christ' is more real and foundational to my existence than the fact that I am a daughter, a wife, mother, teacher, etc. However, if you asked me to describe what it means to be a wife or mother, I could rattle off a list of things that are tangible and relatable. That is not so easy when someone asks what it means to be 'in Christ.'

I would suggest that being 'in Christ' can only be understood in and through a story. I believe this to be the case, because that is exactly how God gave us this and every truth we hold dear. Paraphrasing from this book, one of my favorite books of all time: He didn't give us a book of rules or heroes, he gave us a story; namely, the Bible. It's an adventure story about a young hero who comes from a far country to win back a lost treasure. It's a love story about a brave young Prince who leaves his palace, his throne - everything - to rescue the one he loves. And the best thing about this story is - it's true!

Five years ago, when I was first introduced to [The Jesus Storybook Bible](#) I was blown away by its ability to both simplify and expound the Scripture at the same time. Stories I have known all my life, summarized for a child's understanding and attention span, caused me to fall in love with the Hero of The Story all over again. The idea of "The Kingdom" became less of an idea and more of a reality as I saw all the stories connect to one another. I began to see them more like chapters in THE STORY -- the one where "every story whispers His name".

I have always believed that until one can explain something in simple enough terms for a child to understand, he is failing to really understand it himself. [The Jesus Storybook Bible](#) by Sally Lloyd-Jones was written for children, but as I read it to my children, I am arrested by basic themes of Scripture that begin to travel from my head to my heart. I often find myself in tears at the reality of this Story, this Story where I find myself "in Christ" -- in his life and story.

So, whether you have children or not, I highly recommend reading this book. Give it as a gift to children you know. And spring for the edition that comes with CDs, for listening to The Story is just as important as reading it!

Mission Minute

By Manny Alaniz

It's that time again! That's right—Spring is in the air. Spring means that pollen has filled the air for the flowers to bloom, and has covered our cars with a greenish-brownish hue. It means that the cool breeze that blows in the morning changes to a dry gust as temperatures climb quickly.

The coming of Spring also means that one of our annual Church-wide events is upon us, Redeemer Serves: the City! (RSTC). It seems like just yesterday that we were on our knees digging through the flowerbeds, pulling weeds, planting new flowers and spreading mulch throughout the campus at Rogers Elementary. Ah yes, I remember the event well. I remember the hard work and commitment shown by everyone who attended. I remember entire families—moms, dads and children— working together to complete the task at hand. I remember friends bonding together to overcome obstacles in their pursuit to beautify the campus.

The blessings have been many. As I surveyed the campus for this year's event, the fruits of our labor are evident. Much of the landscaping work is still visible and some, if not most, of the plants and flowers remain. More than that, the impact that we had on the teachers, staff and administrators has resonated in a very positive way. God has been at work before us and well after us!

As we prepare to commit to another day of service, I'm reminded of King David's response to his loyal countryman who wanted to give him the offerings of sacrifice free of charge. King David refused saying, "I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God which cost me nothing (2 Sam. 24:24)." Things are a lot different from the time of King David. We no longer make burnt offerings to the Lord. The sacrifice of the Lamb of God has taken away our sin. He has paid our ransom, once and forever. We now present our bodies as living sacrifices, "which is your [our] spiritual worship." Committing to a day of service will NOT cost you NOTHING. It will cost you time, giving up a Saturday during a holiday weekend. It will cost you effort, getting down, dirty, sweaty and tired, but the efforts of our service unto Christ are so rewarding!

I want to invite everyone to come out and join us to serve our neighbors and our city. I hope to see you, your entire family and your friends there on Saturday, May 28. Please sign-up now, as we need to form our teams early!

REDEEMER EXTENDING THE KINGDOM

Continued from page 1

Word today?" Tom realizes the danger of becoming a ministry-robot. All of those tasks can be done in a soulless, draining way if the man doing them forgets that he is a human, a husband, and father. A sabbatical is engineered to be a reminder of just that.

Longevity- The burnout rate for pastors is unsettling. About 45% according to www.pastorburnout.com (the existence such a website should tell you something about the issue). By taking enough time to truly reset, a pastor allows the wear and tear to heal, and helps him last longer. Like a well-maintained car, sort of. Three months will hopefully allow for the kind of renewal that lasts for years, not months. "At Redeemer we believe that a pastor is most effective when he is around long-term," Tom said.

It is a Missional Idea

The key difference between a vacation and a sabbatical is the focus.

The sabbatical is not intended to be an escape from ministry. It is a time of refreshment and reflection. Another way that Tom will be using this time for the benefit of our church is by studying for his Doctorate of Ministry, focusing on leadership. As Redeemer grows, it is essential that the senior pastor be a strategic and wise leader, especially when it comes to delegation. What better way to put that leadership into practice than to leave the church for three months in the hands of trusted co-laborers? "We are at a point now," he says, "where I really can step away and know that Redeemer will be fine."

As he steps away, knowing that Redeemer will be fine, we want him to know that we will also be praying for the safety, renewal, and refreshment of his family. Please take some time before this summer to let the Gibbs family know that you appreciate them, and are praying for them this summer!

NEW MEMBERS



Jim & Martje De Vries



Laura Gregory



Avril Julander



Michael & Marianne Krier
Ethan ✦ & Wesley ✦



Janna Ludwick



William & Lisa Morales
Warren ✦, Analisa,
Tatyana, Angelina



Daniel & Paige Moreland
Henry



Rebecca Piegols



Ryan & Jenn Stewart
Nicola, Owen, Lanae, Macyn



Eliot Thomasma



Jason & Mandy Tovey



Dan & Haley Wachdorf
Katherine, Isaac



Stephen Winterroth

Not Pictured: Yvonne Perez
✦ *Making a profession of faith*
* *Non-Communing Members*

NEW COMMUNING MEMBERS



David Castaño ✦



Caroline Gibbs ✦



Salem Higey ✦



Kate Rickels ✦



Celeste Walker ✦



Mason Whitley ✦

Missions and Ministries that we support:

For more information about Local Missions please contact Victor Martinez at victor@redeemersa.org. USA and World Missions contact Jason Smith at Jason.smith@optimaliq.com or contact the office, 930-4480.

MISSION SAN ANTONIO:

Agape Pregnancy Center

Stan Young,
Executive Director
Gwen Bridgeford,
Northwest Director

Christian Medical/Dental Association

Scott Phillips, Area Director
Kelly Hooker,
Assistant
Area Director

Rogers Elementary

Marie Rodriguez,
Community Liaison

Young Life

Annie Mays

Strong Foundation

Jim Gipson, Director

International Shelter

Lupe Fernandez, Director

Redeemer Annual

Events

Christianity &
Contemporary
Culture Conference

Christmas Food Baskets

Redeemer Fine Arts Series

Redeemer Serves: the City!

MISSION USA:

Leadership & Ministry Preparation

(L.A.M.P.)

Southwest Church

Planting Network

Bill Thomas, Director

Church Planters:

Carlos and Andrea Cano,
Iglesia La Vid
Laredo, TX

Whitney & Heather
Anderson,
Christ Presbyterian
Church
Georgetown, TX

Reformed University Fellowship

Michael & Rachel Novak,
Trinity University

Bekah McNeel,
Trinity University

Derek and Joy
McCollum,
University of Texas

Ben and Beth Hailey,
Texas A&M University

MISSION WORLD:

Mission to the World

Greg & Amy Sanderson,
Limatambo, Peru

Paul & Dawn Fisher,
Guadalajara, Mexico

Doug & Masha
Shepherd,
L'Viv, Ukraine

Reformed University Fellowship

Peter Dishman,
Mexico City, Mexico

BEAMM

(Border Evangelism and
Mission Ministries)

Gene & LuAnn
Bowman,
Texas/Mexico Border

Campus Outreach

Janet Pursell,
New Zealand/Alabama

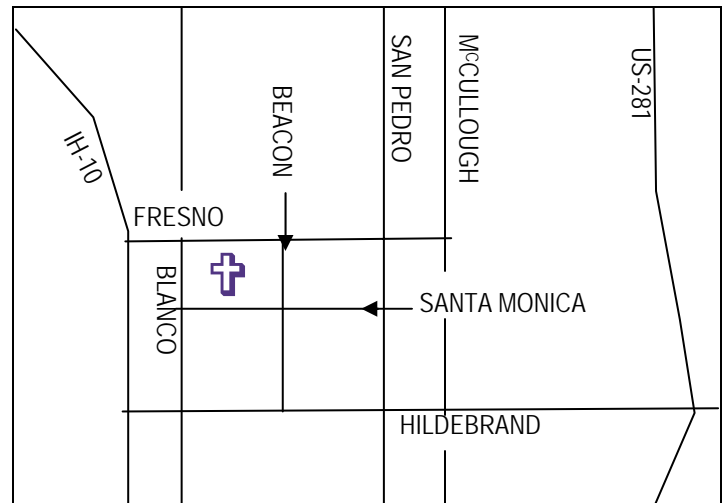
Join us at our worship location, Edison High School,


in the Auditorium on Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 3—Men's Downtown Breakfast**
- May 4—YP 1st Wednesday**
- May 6—Park Day**
- May 8—Youth Group**
- May 11—Redeemer Baby Shower**
- May 13, 14—Men's Campout**
- May 15—Last Day of CE**
- May 17—Women's Tuesday Prayer**
- May 19—Men's Monthly Luncheon**
- May 21—Youth Outing to Medina Spillway**
- May 28—Redeemer Serves: the City!**
- June 1—YP 1st Wednesday**
- June 5—Ice Cream Social**
- June 6-8—Vacation Bible School**
- June 6-9—Jr. High VBS Retreat**
- June 10-19—Peru Mission Trip**

MAP



 Sunday Morning Worship Services
are held in the auditorium
of Edison High School,
located at
701 Santa Monica
San Antonio, TX 78212.