

the *Kerygma*



NEWSLETTER OF REDEEMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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About Kerygma

ke·ryg·ma
(ke-rîg'me) Noun.

We have chosen to name our news letter “the Kerygma” after the Greek word meaning “proclamation or announcement by a herald.” Redeemer is committed to continuing the primary task of the church as a proclaiming outpost of God’s Kingdom. Our job is to be heralds of the most high God and his favor in Jesus Christ.

Our hope is that the newsletter will always remind us of the Christian’s calling: to be a herald for Jesus.

THE AROMA OF GRACE BY TOM GIBBS

Trying to rid your neighborhood of sluggish homes sales? Want to cure those sub-prime blues? Tara and I have just the trick. In preparing to sell our home in Waco several years ago, we read somewhere that a home smelling of freshly baked chocolate chip cookies would do wonders for potential buyers. Not leaving anything to chance Tara made up a batch of dough and before any potential buyer arrived she would pop those things in the oven. It didn’t take long; the first couple to look at our home bit. They made an offer two weeks later. There’s nothing like a warm home filled with the wonderful smell of freshly baked cookies!

Don’t we wish selling our homes were always so easy? Nevertheless, there is a point to the story. First impressions really do make a difference and churches often make bad ones. For this reason, we want Redeemer to be a place where **the aroma of grace**—a warm and winsome atmosphere—greet each person. It is not enough for us to articulate the truths of the Gospel, but as Brandon reminded us a few weeks ago, our convictions must be held in love. In other words, our lives must *illustrate* the Gospel we hold so dear.

Even in a “churched” city like San Antonio, our age is characterized by deep cynicism about the *truth claims* of Christianity and the *character* of the Christians who hold them. We are often viewed as *hypocritical* in terms of the lives we lead and *uninformed* by the world’s standards of truth. To be sure, there is some warrant for these conclusions. Far too often Christians are viewed as waging a war against the culture that we mimic far too much, rather than seeking to welcome people to Christ. How ironic? Christ teaches us, “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him (John 3:17). We often forget that maintaining the claims of Christianity is only *part* of our calling as Christians. We must also seek to hold these truths in a way that people will be drawn instead of repelled.

It is for this reason that Redeemer emphasizes the Christian community. Relationships, rather than programs are fundamental to evangelism. The *community*

of Christ is to be a powerful evangelistic message in itself. Again, Christ’s words make this point, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35). I can think of few words that capture the *difference* the truth of the Gospel is to make in our lives than love. Love for God and love for one another is the touchstone trait of genuine Christian transformation. It is love that “smells” like the Gospel. Tragically, so many of the truths we are committed to are not heard by others, much less experienced as genuine, because they do not feel that arm around the shoulder, receive the warm meal during sickness or get the unexpected, but

sorely needed phone call. Importantly, love is the un-programmed, but intentional demonstration of the Gospel’s relevance. If love is not there, then it can only reinforce the doubts of our culture about the Gospel itself. However, when people begin to see the real difference the Gospel is making in our lives they can then begin to take an interest in the claims we make. In other words, as we give off the aroma of grace it in turn compels others to take an interest in Christ.

**“By this all people
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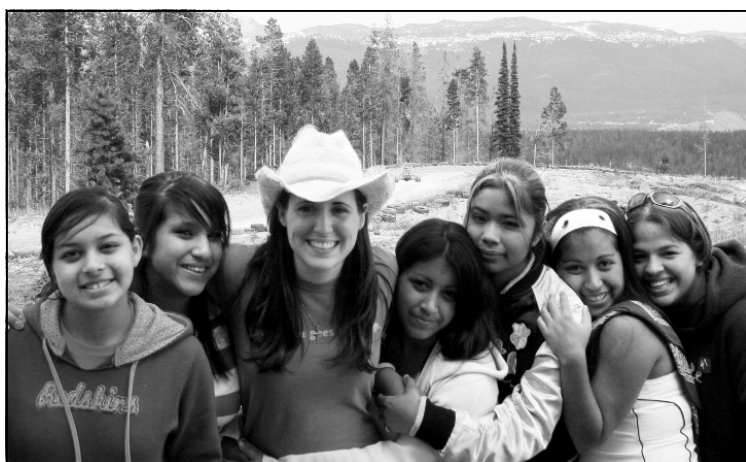
At Redeemer, there are lots of places where we want to cultivate this sort of community—worship, community groups, numerous bible studies and fellowship events. All of these ministry avenues overlap and are intended to get our lives “entangled” with one another. Practically, though, two things are required of us: 1) We must be deeply intentional about getting to know each other; 2) We must be deeply committed to inviting others into our relational networks. Often community and evangelism are spoken of as being in *competition*, but seen in this way they are *complementary*. **When we are growing deep in the Gospel of grace, our lives are growing closer together and reaching out to others at the same time.** Therefore, let me challenge all of us to become increasingly intentional about making worship attendance and community group participation priorities. But at the same time, let’s not forget that every opportunity at Redeemer is an opportunity to invite a friend who has not yet come to know Christ.

Soon we will begin to notice the wonderful aroma of the Gospel!

MISSIONS MINUTE

Young Life, San Antonio by Annie Elbert

As I am transitioning into the "grown-up" world of life after college, working full-time in ministry, and preparing for marriage, adults often ask me, "what's it like working with high school kids these days? They are so off the deep end!" My reply is always the same: that teenagers, underneath sometimes tough and disinterested facades, are desperate for adults in their lives who care about them. At the end of the day, when the TV is off and the text messages stop coming, they still ache for love, significance, and answers to the questions of their hearts. They are ripe for the harvest in God's kingdom, if only we are willing to break down the walls between adults and kids so that we can share the gospel with them. This takes a lot of love and an immense amount of courage.



Annie Elbert with students

The mission of Young Life around the world is to chase after lost and unchurched kids and to bring them to the feet of Jesus through deep and lasting relationships. Young Life staff and volunteers have been reaching out to high school kids in San Antonio for many years now, and we are excited to share that we are now officially ministering at nine high schools in the metro area, with two more in our plans for next year. Caring adults in Young Life, from Stone Oak to the South side, are investing in kids' lives by being present in their high schools, attending basketball games and band competitions, spending time one-on-one with them, and walking alongside them through the challenges of adolescence. Kids also have amazing opportunities to see God's beautiful creation and the adventure of life in Christ on weekend trips and at our world-class summer camps.

My focus on staff is on the South and West sides, based currently at McCollum High School. We've been in the lives of hundreds of McCollum kids for several years now, and starting this summer, their friends down the road at South San Antonio high school will be invited along on the adventure and begin life-long friendships with adults who care about them. It is my dream that we can reach every high school on the South side and all over San Antonio, because we believe that God works powerfully through this commitment to loving kids unconditionally and being the presence of Christ's love in their lives. As a result, part of my job description is getting to see kids cross over from death to life. Many who once would never set foot in a church are now changed forever and welcomed into the body of Christ!

Missions that we support:

Local Missions:

- * Southwest Church Planting Network, Brad Bradley, Director

Church Planters:

- * Allen and Tracy Taha, Trinity Presbyterian Church in Boerne, TX
- * Aaron and Angie Scott, Church of the Cross in San Marcos, TX
 - * Carlos Cano, Iglesia La Vid in Laredo, TX
- * Mark Spence, Providence Presbyterian Mission in Beeville, TX

Reformed University Fellowship:

- * Justin and Elizabeth Clement at Trinity University
- * Benjie and Natalie Slaton at University of Texas
 - * Meg Chapin at University of Texas
- * Derick and Lisal McDonald at University of Texas, International
 - * Ryan and Bonnie Greene at Texas A&M University
 - * Ronnie Rowe, Southwest Area Coordinator

Christian Medical Dental Association:

- * Roger Matkin, Executive Director
- * Scott Phillips, Area Director

Agape Pregnancy Help Center:

- * Shirley Thompson, Executive Director
- * Kira Wesley, Downtown Director

Young Life

- * Annie Elbert

Local Ministries:

- * Guadalupe Community Center, Elvia Gonzalez, Director
- * Tobin Community Center, Ralph Rivera, Director

World Missions:

- * Bill and Jeanine Allen (MTW) in Cusco, Peru
- * Paul and Dawn Fisher (MTW) in Guadalajara, Mexico
 - * Julian Zugg (MTW) in Belize City, Belize
 - * Doug and Masha Shepherd (MTW) in Ukraine
 - * Andrew and Becky Bronson (MTW) in Thailand
 - * Peter Dishman (RUF) in Mexico City, Mexico
 - * John and Heather Ferguson (RUF) in Trujillo, Peru
 - * Josh and Amy Oettle (RUF) in Mexico City, Mexico
 - * Gene and LuAnn Bowman (BEAMM) on the Texas/Mexico Border
 - * Aaron and Leticia Zapata (BEAMM) in Juarez, Mexico

If you would like to know more about the missions Redeemer supports, please contact the Redeemer Office at 930-4480 or John Fitch at jfitch@pol.net.

Redeemer us, Please by Judy Dominick

If you walk into Marble Slab Creamery© and say, “I’d like some ice cream, please,” you might get an inquisitive look from the person behind the counter. And if you go to Starbucks© and simply ask for a cup of coffee, you’re likely to get a similar response. America is the land of opportunity; and because of that, we live in a culture that provides extensive choices for just about everything. For example, we take for granted the ability to order a 20-oz half-caf two-pump hazelnut soy latte. It’s no surprise, then, that a shop-to-suit mentality might spill over into the search for a new church home.

When Peter and I moved to San Antonio in mid-of visiting many churches. But before we got very able to interrupt deeply engrained behavior patterns, and desired was to find a Christ-centered community countability. On our second Sunday in San Antonio, didn’t. We were already wondering if its location going community. And then, a mile after we got was being narrowed to a single lane. We said, “Is and almost gave up on Redeemer as a viable option. day, and we managed to arrive only 15 minutes late.



Peter and Judy Dominick

What happened after that can only be described as God’s doing. Within 2 weeks of that visit, Peter and I had been entertained as lunch guests in someone’s home, I had started going to the women’s Bible study, I had attended a women’s fellowship event, and we had attended a newcomer’s dessert at the Gibbsses’ home. Our experience as newcomers was filled with warm greetings, meaningful after-church conversations, surprise phone calls, kind invitations, discovering fun and quirky connections with people at Redeemer, and being remembered by name. We’re both introverted individuals, and having others take the initiative helped ease much of the social pressure of being new. I remarked to Peter one evening, “You know, people have been very warm and welcoming, and the church leadership is clearly intentional about pursuing people, but the way that I experience it all is that God Himself is pursuing and loving us.” As we got to know more people through both Bible study and the community group we joined, we were particularly impressed by the honesty with which people shared their struggles and the comfort level at which they listened to others do the same. We observed a body of believers willing to bare their messy hearts and lives before one another and then encourage and pray for each other to grow in Christ-centeredness. We recognized it as nothing less than a supernatural community that had been formed and was being transformed by God. We – messy, sinful people also in need of transformation – had found our church home. We joined in December.

September 2007, we were excited about the prospect far into the process, the Holy Spirit, who is uniquely helped us remember that what we both really needed where we could make genuine friends and have ac- we visited Redeemer Presbyterian. But we almost would be too far away for us to find meaningful, on- onto 281-S, we found ourselves in heavy traffic that this how the commute is going to be every Sunday?” But Peter strengthened his resolve to get us there that

Meet the Beham Family by Matthew Beham

So how do you “Meet the Beham Family” as the title of this article misleadingly suggests you will? I thought it might look something like one of my family Christmas letters, but it just isn’t the season, and I am still getting used to the idea of Haley and my being considered a family. And, if you don’t know who I am, that is ok, because people keep telling me that I won’t really know who I am until I am at least a few years into my new marriage anyway. However, I can tell you the basics.

I, Matthew Beham, have been working at Redeemer since January 2nd as the Youth Director. I report to Brandon Eggar, so I much prefer to call myself the Assistant to the Assistant Pastor. I graduated from Trinity University this past December, and have had to start working for a long time! I don’t know how you adults do it. I still don’t feel I know what I am doing, but Brandon and Tom assure me that we’re all still learning. I am extremely blessed to be working alongside Patrick and Aubree Shay, who have been faithfully laboring with the Youth for the past few years. It is a privilege to watch how

God is at work in the lives of His covenant. To be given a small part in helping minister to the needs of Redeemer kids is a great honor. And I can’t leave out the added plus that I can resist orthodox grammar and business attire even though I am out in the “real world”.



Haley and I were just married on February 16, and she is a wonderful foil for both my personality and my impish plots of world domination. So far, our hobbies are collecting epithets (Haley was recently dubbed “the iguana hunter” on our honeymoon in Belize), Haley’s presiding over my dishwashing skills, and seeking to be faithful stewards of the grace of God in the lives of the

youth at Redeemer Presbyterian Church (If that was an earful, be happy you aren’t on the youth email list). Both Haley and I were extremely impacted as young’uns by our youth leaders, and our desire is to aid the Redeemer youth in building deeper relationships with their peers and parents, the body of the Church as a whole, and Christ the Lord.

Haley also graduated in December from Texas A&M with a degree in Architecture (Environmental Design). She is very excited to work alongside a few members of the Church at Lake Flato as an intern, and to be apart of this Church—with its vision for the redemption of the city, and to enjoy the sweet RUF tunes that we sing (Haley attended RUF at A&M). In all honesty, we are a bit apprehensive of the many challenges ahead, both in being faithful in what God has given us, and in navigating the obstacles, hopes, and fears that marriage brings. However, we couldn’t be more excited about the opportunity to be at Redeemer. You have already shown us so much love and support, and we look forward to more fully sharing our lives with you!

Join us
at our worship
location,
The McAllister
Fine Art Center
on Sundays
at 9:30 a.m.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| March 7-8 | Men's Outing |
| March 20 | Maundy Thursday Service |
| March 21 | Good Friday Service |
| March 23 | Easter Service |
| March 27 | Women's Fellowship Night |
| April 5 | Newcomer's Dessert |
| April 17 | Men's Fellowship Night |

MAP



 Sunday Morning Worship Services are held
at the McAllister Fine Arts Center