

the *Kerygma*



NEWSLETTER OF REDEEMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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General Assembly, Presbytery and Presbyterianism?

Redeemer is a member congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). The word "presbyterian" refers to our form of church government and comes from the Greek word for elder. Yet presbyterianism also refers to our connectedness to other churches. Within the PCA churches do not stand alone. Instead, we recognize that each church is connected and accountable to other churches. We see this principle clearly illustrated in the Council of Jerusalem recorded for us in Acts 15. There the apostles and elders of the church gathered to settle a dispute over circumcision. Today the collective church, or connected church, gathers to initiate new ministries, nurture existing ones and settle disputes among the churches. When this occurs in a region like South Texas we call it a presbytery. Redeemer is a part of the South Texas Presbytery. When it occurs at a national level we call it the General Assembly. Most presbyteries meet four times per year while the General Assembly meets only once per year. In June the General Assembly of the PCA met in Chattanooga, TN.

Of central importance to the presbytery's work is the formation of new churches. Redeemer is a church plant of the South Texas Presbytery. Along with financial support, South Texas Presbytery exercised spiritual oversight to our new congregation, examined our elected elders and provided invaluable insight into the way ahead. Now, Redeemer shares such responsibilities with other churches in our region as we prepare for yet new church plants in our area.

In our day when it is common to disregard accountability to one another and trumpet the benefits of individualism, give thanks to the Presbyterianism which celebrates our common bonds and mutual vision of the church!

SUMMER REST! BY TOM GIBBS

As summer is now in full-swing, our appetite for rest and relaxation is at its peak! We are hungry for the best of what summer has to offer: shorter work days, lazy days by the pool and extended vacations to exotic locales. Whether flying half-way across the world or just having a nice dinner half-way across town, all of us are eager for a break. To be sure, rest is at the top of our lists for summer time priorities.

As Christians, though, what is to be our perspective on the summer's rest? If you have followed along in our study of the Apocalypse of John, or the letter better known as Revelation, you know that one of God's priorities is to increase our appetite for the rest of his new creation; The New Heavens and the New Earth. (Rev. 21:1) Revelation presents us with a "Sabbath" rest that will endure into the ages forevermore. Literally, the word Sabbath means a "ceasing" or "rest." The picture of Sabbath rest that we look forward to is one of eternal satisfaction in a renewed creation and an eternal delight in the redemption secured by the Lamb on the throne. Verses three and four describe the richness of this eternal rest as a world where "the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." (Rev. 21:3-4) Christ has secured a renewed world wherein the "miseries of this life and death itself" have been finally banished. Yet also, by becoming for us a sin-offering (2 Corinthians 5:21), Jesus has secured our place within the family of God by removing the guilt and pollution of sin. Christ's work means both a renewed universe and a renewed relationship with the God of that universe.

Importantly, the writer to the Hebrews also speaks of this rest as something that remains yet future: "So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his." (Hebrews 4:9-10) Here the writer to the Hebrews affirms the vision given to John and reminds us that such a Sabbath rest is yet remaining for the people of God.

The perspective of Hebrews illustrates that the Israelites entry into the promised land of Canaan was not their final destination, but only a shadow of a greater, more fulfilling Sabbath that was yet to come. As Christians we still affirm the importance of the weekly resting

of our labors so that the people of God might gather for the worship of the Lamb upon the throne, yet we do so on Resurrection Day. Such a ceasing enables us to contemplate in worship the one who has worked on our behalf. Our ceasing is an expression of faith; faith that looks back to a rest secured, and faith that looks forward to a rest not yet entered. By celebrating Sunday as the Sabbath, we are reminded that rest is eternally linked with the one who has worked in our place.

Far from a legalistic cessation of activity, the Sabbath, as Jesus reminds us, "was made for man," rather than man being made for the Sabbath. (Mark 2:27) I know that it is a great temptation for us to craft lists of do's and don'ts when it comes to "keeping the Sabbath". However, the emphasis of the New Testament seems to be upon living out of Sabbath rather than living to keep it. In other words, Sabbath reminds us that we now live out of the resources of Jesus Christ and in the theater of his creative handiwork; the world he has made.

Nevertheless, we must also recognize that even though we have entered into the spiritual realities of the Sabbath rest, we have not experienced its fullness. Like our forefathers before, we await a greater, more fulfilling Sabbath that will be the New Heavens and the New Earth, and our marriage to the Lamb. Our rest is already, but it is also not yet. The final fulfillment of Sabbath will be the full enjoyment of Christ's salvific resources in the renewed world that he will craft!

And it is for this reason that we, as Christians, have a distinctive view of rest when it comes to summer vacations. Rest is not something that we fuel up on *by getting away* from the busy school day schedule, the weekly commute to the office where we battle traffic for one hour each way, or even by sleeping in a few extra hours on the weekend. As wonderful as those escapes are (and trust me, I know they're wonderful), they do not provide the resources of rest that we ultimately need. While they may *temporarily bring sanity back to our lives, they will not bring sanctity*. That is, worldly rest may bring *some measure of relief, but it will not redeem life*.

Only Sabbath, as it is pictured for us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, has the promise of such a rest. In Christ, we can truly rest from our labors of trying to earn the favor of God. Only in Christ can we rest from thinking that our identity is merely a function of our work.

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REDEEMER EXTENDING THE KINGDOM

MISSIONS MINUTE

Reformed University Fellowship:

Reformed University Fellowship is reaching college students in 27 states through 85 ministries. In 33 years of ministry, RUF has grown from one ministry in 1972, to eighty-five in 2005. RUF demonstrates a heart for God, a love for the campus and biblical convictions that are well formed and deeply held. This allows RUF to bring a fully-orbed ministry to students. As a ministry of the Presbyterian Church in America, RUF reflects the historic positions of the Church. Instructed and guided by this system of belief, RUF has developed a philosophy of ministry which is biblically informed and pastorally sensitive. It equips students to love and serve Jesus Christ and his Church. Redeemer supports several RUF ministries in Texas. Visit the Reformed University Fellowship web site at www.ruf.org.

Rice University, Rev. Pat Roach:

This past year at Rice was a good year for ministry. In particular, we saw the young men in our group really begin to grow in their understanding and practice of the gospel with their fellow students. Realizing that so much of their lives were self-centered and shallow, they began to proactively put down their books and begin to spend time with one another praying and encouraging one another from Scripture. For this I am very thankful and look forward to seeing how they continue to reach out.

Next year we are looking at doing ministry on the campus of the University of Houston. We already have a small but robust core group of students who are enthusiastic about RUF being at UH. Please pray for that work. Visit the Rice RUF website at www.rice.ruf.org.

Texas A&M University, Rev. John Ferguson:

This has been one of the most challenging and fruitful years of ministry that we have had at Texas A&M. Challenging, because of many pastoral issues that arose, and fruitful because we have seen more growth in grace, especially among our leadership.

In our large group meetings, we spent the whole academic year going verse by verse through 1 Peter and were really challenged to ask what it meant to be a community of Christians on an unbelieving, postmodern, apathetic campus. The highlight of our year was being able to send mission teams to various parts of the world over spring break. One team went to Juarez, Mexico and I led another team to work in Trujillo, Peru.

Thank you for your constant support and prayers. It is a privilege to serve as your partner in ministry to the university students at TAMU. Visit the A&M RUF web site at www.aggieruf.org.

The University of Texas, Rev. Benji Slaton

RUF at Texas was tremendously blessed this spring. Most significantly, we saw a number of new faces become a regular part of the group, attend Bible studies, and seek out Meg and me in trust-confidence relationships. Among this group there was at least one girl whom, I believe, has been converted during her time with RUF.

We need much in the way of prayer. First, although we have been in good shape financially, we are on the verge of moving into new office space that potentially could increase our expenses by \$7,000 a year. Secondly, please pray for staff changes this summer. Our intern, Meg Chapin, will be transitioning into a staff role with us, and we will be receiving a new intern, Robert Rolling (from SMU). Finally, pray for my family as we continue to adjust to our new child, as well as for my ability to trust God's sovereign work and his goodness in my life and the lives of my students. Visit the UT RUF web site at www.utexasruf.com.

Tobin Community Center, by Margaret Judson

Twice a month, I headed north of 1604 to pick up two of my children from school and then travel back downtown to the Tobin Community Center to help out with the after-school tutoring sponsored by Redeemer. I confess that there were several times, while volunteering, that I felt conflicted about my role as a mother and struggled with sinful fears of time management. How could I help other children after school when this was my busiest time of day with my own family?

I prayed that God would guide me where I needed to be. Then He abundantly showed me that service to Him would not always be convenient, or fit within my schedule. However, He would honor it and use it for His glory.

Once we were at the Tobin Community Center, it was clear to me that I was where God wanted me to be. We would help a small, but consistent group of young students with their week's assignments and listen to them read. It was such a rewarding experience! For more information about the Tobin Community Center, contact John Fitch (824-5973)

Agape Pregnancy Help Center:

Next Volunteer Counselor Training Classes: Aug 19th & 20th and Nov 11th & 12th. (Friday night from 6-9 pm and Saturday from 9 am-4:30 pm) For more information, contact Teresa McCaleb. (826-7634)

SUMMER REST! (CONTINUED)

Instead, both work and rest are seen through the lens of Jesus' work. His work brings a Sabbath that truly satisfies.

For Christians this all means that summer must have a distinctively Christ-centered orientation. As well as being a time for the refreshment of our bodies, our spirits should also be revived. God is the one who invites rest for weary bodies as well as weary spirits. As a result, don't excuse yourself from the richness of the treasures of the Gospel as you take your vacations. Make

use of the time that you don't have scheduled. Partake in Sabbath by being refreshed in the reading of Scripture, having extended periods of prayer with your spouse or family, and attending weekly worship at a local congregation that upholds the name of Christ.

Such an approach to summer vacation should serve to both refresh our lives and fuel our desire. Our lives are refreshed as we participate in the normal blessings of Sabbath, something that should more and more characterize our lives

throughout the year. But also, our desire for more is fueled. A sanctified orientation, when it comes to summer, serves to remind us that summer vacation is not our destination. Christians are those who have chosen not to settle for the fleeting delights of this broken world, but instead, to long for the eternal and mind-bending wonders of the Sabbath that is yet to come.

I hope that you have a blessed and restful summer!

FOCUS ON FAMILIES

QUINCY AND ANNE DAVIDSON

BY LORI DANTE

Quincy and Anne Davidson were both raised in the San Antonio area. They met in high school but didn't begin to date until they were attending the University of Texas at Austin. They were married one year ago in Fredericksburg, Texas, where Anne's parents now live.

Anne is a speech pathologist who does contract work for adults at several hospitals and nursing homes. She ministers to victims of stroke, Parkinson's Disease, and various brain injuries. It's particularly heart wrenching for her to see younger adults suddenly unable to communicate with their families. However, she works to give them back that freedom. Anne has been involved in church throughout her life. She especially experienced a growth in her

faith during her college years, while she was attending Mesa Community Church and participating in Bible Study Fellowship.

Quincy is interested in participating in Bible Study Fellowship in the Fall. He may also pursue some basic theology courses. Quincy works in insurance sales for MetLife. He and Anne had been living and working in Dallas while he was commuting part of the time to San Antonio. By God's grace, he was given an opportunity to move to San Antonio and work out of his home. This spared him long hours at the airport and time away from his bride. Business is going well for him. He reports the space taken up by his files is starting to overtake their home in Alamo Heights! They are finding that San

Antonio is a bit more relaxed place to live compared to Dallas (a side bonus!). They also like being back in familiar surroundings.

The Davidson's heard about Redeemer through their previous church home in Dallas. They enjoyed the warm welcome when they first visited Redeemer. Many people introduced themselves the first week and stayed to chat awhile. Folks were friendly and open to the newcomers.

This energetic couple has already volunteered for church outreach activities (such as the Ice Cream Social recently). They hope to pursue their careers here and eventually start a family.

**(See the Davidsons pictured below in the New Members section)*

REDEEMER NEWS

NEW MEMBERS

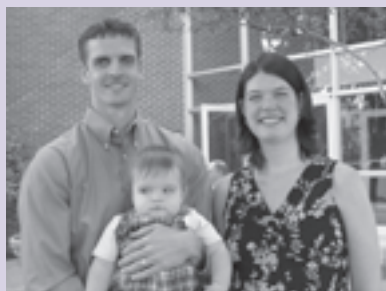
Quincy and Anne Davidson



Peter, Sarah, Maddy and Emily* Howard*



Colin, Laurie and Canon Moffett*



David and Hannah Miller



James and Jennifer Romig



** non communing member*

PRESBYTERIAN REDEEMER

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www.redeemersa.org

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

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|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| July 9 | Belize Progressive Dinner |
| July 17 | Redeemer in the Country |
| July 21 | Men's Fellowship Night |
| July 21 | Ladies' Fellowship Night |
| August 2 | Newcomers' Dessert |
| August 12,13 | Intro to Redeemer Class |
| August 21 | Redeemer in the Park |
| August 28 | Christian Education Begins |

MAP



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