

Adult Formation Programs

Fall and Advent 2017

Adult Forums

Advent Quiet Morning

Bible Studies



Adult Forum Series

Sundays at 10:30am

Parish House, Room 1-2-3

Truly and Devoutly Serving: Adventures in Christian Vocation

There was a time in the Episcopal Church when the word “minister” was only applied to those who had been ordained. The 1979 Book of Common Prayer, however, made it clear that “the ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons.” Every baptized Christian, in other words, is called to be a minister of the gospel. In the almost 40 years since the “new” prayer book was approved, the Episcopal Church has struggled to figure out what this means. Is our ministry the work that we do on behalf of the Church? Is it just the way we make a living? Or is it something else entirely? Part of the reason for this confusion is that we’ve forgotten what it means to have a vocation. We generally use the word “vocation” as a synonym for “career.” Our Christian vocation, however, is, at the same time, much simpler and much more demanding than establishing a career. Put simply, our Christian vocation is to allow our lives to be shaped by the grace of God made known in Jesus Christ. It is to embrace a perspective informed by a deep awareness of God’s grace and love. For this reason, ministry is less about what we do and more about who we are. It is an attitude, a posture towards the world, as much as anything else. As we begin the program year at Redeemer, our Adult Forums consider the various ways people from Redeemer exercise their ministries and put their vocations into practice. Join on Sunday mornings at 10:30 in Room 1-2-3 as we hear from members of our parish community who, in the words of the Book of Common Prayer, are “truly and devoutly serving” the Church of God.

9/10/2017

Meet the New Associate



In August, the Church of the Redeemer welcomed **the Reverend Jo Ann Jones** as the newest addition to our staff. Ordained to the diaconate earlier this year, Jo Ann has been actively

involved in church life on both a parish and diocesan level for many years, and brings a wealth of experience to her work at The Redeemer. Join Jo Ann as she shares the story of her faith journey and answers questions.

9/17/2017

Perfecting God’s Praises



Towards the end of the Book of Common Prayer, there is a prayer for church musicians that asks God to be present with those “who seek through art and music to perfect the praises” offered by God’s people. It is notable that this prayer as-

sumes we are meant to grow in our ability to give praise to God. This summer, Redeemer’s intrepid music director **Dr. Michael Diorio** traveled to Oxford to study at the prestigious Choral Institute. While it was a time of professional development, it was

also a time when Michael grew in his understanding of his vocation as a church musician and his ability to give praise to God. Join Michael as he reflects on his experience in Oxford.

9/24/2017

Saint James School



With one of the largest and most impoverished school districts in the country, Philadelphia has a significant need for quality educational institutions. St. James School is an Episcopal middle school committed to educating traditionally under-resourced students in a nurturing environment. The school provides a challenging academic program and encourages the development of the moral, spiritual, intellectual, physical, and creative gifts in its students. Since the school's founding, many members of The

Redeemer have offered their gifts of time and talent to the students of Saint James. Join Head of School **David Kasievich** and several of these volunteers as they discuss the ways they are involved in the mission and ministry of this vital institution.

10/1/2017

Youth Mission Trip Retrospective



In June, an enthusiastic group of youth and adults from The Redeemer traveled to Kentucky to repair homes with the Appalachia Service Project. During their weeklong mission, those who participated learned the benefits of hard work, camaraderie, and putting one's faith into practice. Join those who participated in the mission trip as they share stories and reflect on their experience in Kentucky.

"God's Truth Abideth Still": The Reformation 500 Years Later

In October of 1517, an Augustinian monk named Martin Luther walked up to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg and posted a list of grievances against the excesses of the Roman Catholic Church. The posting of Luther's "95 Theses" is widely considered the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, a seismic shift in the theological, political, and philosophical geography of Europe and, ultimately, the entire world. The Reformation represented a fundamental shift in the way Christians understood their relationship with God. It also touched off some of the most savage conflicts in European history, as Catholics and Protestants vied for doctrinal supremacy. Despite the conflict his protest engendered, however, Luther never intended to leave the Roman Catholic Church. Moreover, though initially opposed to Luther's novel theology, the Roman Catholic Church eventually came to embrace principal theological innovation: justification by grace through faith, the belief that we are reconciled to God through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and not through the mediation of an ecclesiastical authority. All of this raises an important question: what significance does the Reformation have 500 years later? If Luther's fundamental disagreement with the Roman Catholic Church has been resolved, is there anything preventing Catholics and Protestants from being reconciled to one another? Furthermore, how relevant are the doctrinal disputes of the Reformation in our increasingly secular age? In other words, does the Reformation still matter? In honor of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, our 2017 Fall Forum Series at The Redeemer will explore these and other questions.

Adult Forums

10/8/2017

By Schisms Rent Asunder, By Rummage Sales Distressed



In 2012, Phyllis Tickle published a book entitled *The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why*. Tickle's primary observation is that the Church experiences the equivalent of a "rummage

sale" about every 500 years: a destabilizing and dislocating moment when it is forced to reevaluate what it means to be the Church. Noting that the Reformation was the last such moment in church history, she argues that we are in the midst of a "rummage sale" moment today. If this is indeed the case, we are left to wonder what the Reformation reveals about who we are as Christians. Perhaps more urgently, the similarity between our era and that the Reformation invites us to consider what guidance the Reformation (or any of the Church's other "rummage sale" moments, for that matter) can provide as the Church finds its way forward in a rapidly changing world. Join **David Romanik** as he begins our series on the Reformation by discussing Tickle's book and exploring these questions.

10/15/2017

Reconsidering Justification?



Of all the issues that led to the Reformation, the most theologically significant was the doctrine of justification: the assertion that we are reconciled to God through grace and not through the mediation of an ecclesiastical authority. Viewed with suspicion by the Roman Catholic hierarchy, this doctrine became a major flashpoint in the

conflict between Protestants and Catholics. In 1999, however, the Catholic Church's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Lutheran World Federation issued the "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification." It was an astonishing historical moment in which the two primary antagonists of the Reformation came to an agreement about the era's most controversial issue. As more churches have embraced the Joint Declaration in the intervening years, some have wondered whether Catholics and Protestants are moving toward reconciliation. Join **Steven Boyer**, professor of theology at Eastern University, as he examines this landmark agreement and explores its implications for Christian unity.

10/22/2017

Mission is the Mother of Ecumenism



While the Roman Catholic Church has sponsored missions around the world for more than five hundred years, Protestants were not actively engaged in cross-cultural mission until the 18th century. Interestingly,

the very first Protestant mission was a collaborative effort among several denominations. Though latecomers to cross-cultural mission, in other words, Protestants were on the vanguard of the ecumenical movement. Indeed, long before ecumenism fashionable, Christians of many denominations were cooperating out of a shared sense of their responsibility to bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Join **Paul Rajashekar**, the Luther T. Reed Professor of Systematic Theology at the Lutheran Theological Seminary of Philadelphia, as he explores how the Reformation influenced both the ecumenical movement and the mission all Christians share.

10/29/2017

A Brief History of Truth



In John’s gospel, Jesus proclaims, “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.” Despite the clarity of this statement, human beings have long struggled to discern what is true.

This, in fact, was one of the central issues of the Reformation. The Reformation not only challenged historical truths that were once taken for granted; it also raised fundamental doubts about the source of those truths. Indeed, much of the Reformation was about asking one question: who (or what) is the ultimate arbiter of truth? Join **William Madges**, professor of theology at Saint Joseph’s University, as he examines the development of this question and considers how it might resonate in our world today.

11/5/2017

The Problem with Grace



Since the Church was, in many ways, the nexus of power in 16th century Europe, the Reformation was unquestionably a political movement. As a result, both reformers and defenders of the Roman Catholic Church used theological

terms to describe political realities. Given the cultural shifts of the past 500 years, we might be tempted to think that theological language is no longer relevant in the public square. In *The Problem with Grace*, however, **Vincent Lloyd** explores the continued political relevance of theological concepts like love, faith, liturgy, and revelation. Join Dr. Lloyd, Associate Professor of Theology at Villanova University, as he considers how

a deep understanding of political theological vocabulary can shape our view of the world.

11/12/2017

The Real Story of the English Reformation



While the study of history is often about identifying seminal events, this approach often leads us to fundamentally misunderstand historical realities.

This is particularly true of the English Reformation. The popular narrative is that the founding of the Anglican Church resulted from a conflict between Henry VIII and the Pope, but the truth is far more complicated. In fact, many of the dynamics that emerged during the English Reformation continue to influence the both the Church of England and its descendants, including the Episcopal Church. Join **Dr. Margo Todd**, professor of history at the University of Pennsylvania, as she examines the turbulent and fascinating story of the Reformation in England and Scotland.

11/19/2017

Luther the Augustinian



By 16th-century standards, Martin Luther was an iconoclast who was unafraid to challenge the status quo. At the same time, Luther was deeply formed by his membership in a religious community.

Founded in the 13th century, Luther’s community, the Order of Saint Augustine, had a particular understanding of the Church’s role, one that would have shaped Luther’s worldview. Join **Fr. Allan Fitzgerald**, Augustinian friar and Director of the Augus-

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tinian Institute at Villanova University, as he shares the unique Augustinian vision and considers how it might have influenced Martin Luther's worldview.

11/26/2017

The "Other" Schism



The Protestant Reformation precipitated a profound transformation within Christianity, but it was not the first time the Church was divided as the result of theological controversies. Almost five centu-

ries before Luther's protest, the churches of Rome and Constantinople broke communion over questions of theology and ecclesiastical authority. In our bias towards simplicity, we often pinpoint the split between the Eastern and Western churches to this particular moment in history. In fact, however, the schism evolved over centuries, beginning a conversation that was relevant during the Reformation era and, in many ways, continues to this day. Join **Joseph Loya**, professor of theology at Villanova University and priest in the Eastern Catholic tradition, as he examines the ongoing dialogue between East and West and warns that we oversimplify history at our peril.

Advent Forum Series

Time, Eternity, and God

More than any other season in the Church year, Advent is concerned with time. For many of us, this is most evident in our countdown to Christmas; indeed, much of Advent is concerned with lamenting how little time is available to us as we attend various holiday gatherings, shop for family and friends, and do our end-of-year charitable work. In this sense, Advent simply becomes an extension of our overscheduled and excessively busy lives. When understood properly, however, Advent reveals the unique relationship Christians are meant to have with time. It is the moment in the liturgical calendar when we acknowledge that in Jesus Christ, the eternal has come to dwell among us. The implications of this recognition are profound: we are free to live our lives understanding that time is not a commodity to be spent, but a gift from God. Moreover, we can view the world not from our parochial historical vantage, but from the perspective of eternity. This year, our Advent forum series will explore the ways that time is measured in the Christian tradition and how this can change the way we experience the world.

12/3/2017

A Time for Every Purpose Under Heaven

We generally assume that there is only one way to measure time, but in fact, the measurement of time is often relative and dependent on many variables. This is a persistent, if unfamiliar theme in the Bible. Indeed, one of Scripture's fundamental assumptions is that our faith can reorient our understanding of time. Join us as we explore the biblical understanding of time and consider how it can shape our perspective on the world.

12/10/2017

"You are Unchangeably Eternal": Theological Time in Augustine's Confessions



Despite revolutionizing Christian theology, Augustine of Hippo is probably best remembered for writing *Confessions*, one of the world's first autobiographies. Modern readers of *Confessions* tend to focus exclusively

on the lurid details of Augustine's young life and the story of his conversion to Christianity. This, however, ignores the more important and, frankly, more interesting part of the book, in which Augustine lays out his theological vision. In particular, the African bishop describes time in a way that fundamentally challenges our experience of the world. Join **Peter Vanderveen** as he examines a new translation of this ancient autobiography and explores how it might shape our lives today.

12/17/2017

Messiah and the Sovereignty of God



There are few pieces of music that are more familiar than Messiah, George Frideric Handel's sweeping oratorio about the coming of God's anointed. Unlike some of Handel's other

oratorios, Messiah does not have much of a plot. It is not particularly focused on the life of Jesus, though he is purportedly its main character. Indeed, Messiah's text seems to go out of its way to avoid anything that is directly applicable to our situation. This is because Messiah is not about us: ultimately, it is meant to illustrate how God transcends time and our experience of it. Join **David Romanik** as he examines this extraordinary piece and considers how it illuminates our understanding of God.

Adult Formation Committee

The Very Rev. David F. Romanik, Leader
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Andrea Cayley
Rita Davis
Anna Gerrity
Monica Hackett
Margaret Helminska
Elizabeth Mclean (*Vestry Liason*)
Ginger Woods

Special & Ongoing

12/2/2017

Women's Advent Quiet Morning

Take a break from the pre-Christmas frenzy and join us for music, prayer, readings, and fellowship, as we focus on the time of waiting, wonder, and anticipation that precedes the arrival of a child into our lives. There will be coffee, tea and morning snacks beginning at 8:00 am, so come on time to meet and chat before we start our quiet hour. It truly is a quality hour of renewal and will help you put the Christmas hustle and bustle in perspective so that you can more fully experience the joy of the season. All women are invited and encouraged to bring a friend.

Contact [Devika Singh](mailto:devikasingh74@hotmail.com) at devikasingh74@hotmail.com

Men's Brown Bag Bible Study

Thursdays 12:00 pm, Conference Room, Parish House

Bring your lunch and your inquiring spirit to join in a wide-ranging discussion about writings of C. S. Lewis, the Gospels, the letters of Paul, and the religious issues of our day.

Contact [Bob Peck](mailto:rpeck99@comcast.net) at rpeck99@comcast.net

Women's Brown Bag Bible Study

Thursdays 12:00-1 pm, Library, Parish House

Bring your lunch if you wish

We are reading and comparing the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, encountering Jesus and the Word He was sent to proclaim in a fresh way. Come with a beginner's mind. No previous Bible study experience is necessary, all questions are welcome, and there is no homework. Expect to gain new insights into your understanding of the scriptures and the life of Jesus and to have a goodtime. We wholeheartedly welcome new members!

Contact [Barbara Billings](mailto:bandsbil@verizon.net) at bandsbil@verizon.net

