

FELLOWSHIP

NEWCOMER PROFILE

PEOPLE MAKING THE REDEEMER THEIR SPIRITUAL HOME

INTERVIEWD BY KEN GARNER



This month, meet Jennifer and John Webster.

I thank Jennifer for sharing her story with us about her family's entry into The Redeemer community.

How long have you been attending services here?

We started attending services at The Redeemer as a family in September, 2013. We feel a great sense of accomplishment when we make it to The Redeemer to worship as a family and attend Church School.

Are you life-long Episcopalians?

No we are not. John and I were both raised Catholic. When Sophia was in Kindergarten, I felt we needed to more formally begin her religious education. Last year I taught Kindergarten PREP (parish religious education program) at

St. Margaret's in Narberth.

What is your previous church experience, if any?

I have always attended church. John not so much, until we had children. We both believe our children need to have a religious foundation and have faith in God. Most importantly, we want our children to believe in something greater than themselves and grow up with other children and families who share the same values.

How did you find The Redeemer?

I found out about The Redeemer through the Thanksgiving Pie Sale! A neighbor of ours was promoting the pie sale, and we got to talking about local churches in the area that really encouraged fellowship and family involvement.

Wow, now that's a first, I think.

What inspired you to attend?

I was first inspired to attend The Redeemer out of curiosity. I went to one church service by myself way back in December, 2012. I was impressed, but felt I needed to learn more and honor the commitment I had made as a Sunday school teacher. We were added to the church's mailing list, and I read a book advertised in the *Voice of the Redeemer* called, Jesus was an Episcopalian (and you can be one too!) by Chris Yaw. I

highly recommend this book to newcomers. It is well laid out and an easy read. It doesn't answer all of your questions about The Episcopal Church (I think by design), which is why, over the summer, I met with Father Vanderveen at great length to discuss the many questions I had about The Redeemer. I then met with Tory Kline to discuss nursery care and Sunday School for our three kids. I never felt pressured to attend...only welcomed. After careful consideration John and I decided that The Redeemer was the right fit for our family and we joined in September, 2013.

What would you want to tell others about The Redeemer to encourage them to come and explore our parish?

There is a reverence and tradition at The Redeemer that makes Sunday feel special. People dress for church and sit with their family and loved ones. We sing together (inspired by the beautiful voices in the choir), REALLY listen to the sermon, and pray. After church there are opportunities to socialize and also learn more. My husband is a huge fan of the thought provoking Forum series whereas I am a little more social. Our children learn by example, and there is a feeling of hope and satisfaction that we are not alone on this journey.

Since we're in the midst of our annual stewardship campaign, can you share with us why you feel it's important to financially support the church?

Financially supporting The Redeemer is a decision we have made because it shows we are committed to the church's success. We also want to be a part of funding programs that build faith across the generations and help those less fortunate than we are.

Tell us a bit about yourself outside of The Redeemer—your jobs, your family, your hobbies.

John and I have been blessed with three beautiful children: Sophia (almost 7), Timothy (4 1/2), and Daniel (3 1/2). Having no family in the immediate area, John and I are very busy raising three children under seven. Our boys are in preschool and Sophia is a first grader at Penn Valley Elementary School. John trades commodities and runs his own company, Dyon LLC. I taught at Gladwyne Elementary School for almost 14 years but am now staying home full-time to care for our children. We have a love/hate relationship with fixing up our old house in Wynnewood, and someday, well into the future, hope to host a Redeemer family-friendly event.

FIGHTING BURNOUT

DEVELOPING PARISH LEADERSHIP

BY PETER VANDERVEEN

Becoming a member of a church committee is often too much like an appointment to the Supreme Court (without the grueling Senate hearing process): it becomes a lifetime position. Longevity and the institutional knowledge that comes with it is to be valued, but too little change in membership across the span of our committees leads to personal burn-out and equally exhausted traditions.

Long tenure may stem from the unique talents one brings to the work of a committee. It may be just as much, however, the result of multiple forms of inertia.

- In the popular imagination, it is assumed that ready volunteers are few and hard to find.
- People continue serving on committees until suddenly one morning they wake up and know with dead certainty that they no longer have the patience and strength to attend one more meeting. They resign their post, and no one is tapped to take their place.

- After months of depletion and fretting over having fewer attendees at meetings, committee members identify church members who are already serving on one or several committees and ask them to take on one more responsibility.

These habits lessen the vitality of church leadership.

In the effort to increase the health and vitality of our committees and, thereby, our parish life, we are taking steps to create a more highly defined committee system with a clear process for member turnover and succession. In the next several months, the vestry liaisons to our committees will be seeking specific data and working with parish leaders to make the committee structures more dynamic. This will include:

- determining the number of members each committee will have,
- naming a chairperson,
- determining how many members will rotate off the committee each year and who those members will be for 2015,

- and recruiting, well ahead of time, new members who will step up as other committee members step down.

By naming specific terms of service and preparing year round for new members, our lay leadership will remain fresh and broad. Individuals will not have to fear being asked to serve, since their service will have identified limits, and the regular cultivation of new leaders will make the task of finding them easier. All turnover on the committees will occur at the Annual Meeting, where we can thank those who are retiring and recognize those who are assuming duties.

The vestry liaisons for 2014 are:

Carol Chew – Music
Ginger Woods – Buildings & Churchyard
Rodger McKinney – Outreach Grants
Emily Beamer – New
Jacques Vaclair, Eric Rabe – Stewardship
Devika Singh – Youth Formation
Richard Aldridge – Growth & Development
Ellen Wang – Mission Strategy
David Senior – Finance & Investment
Ulf Cahn von Seelen – Nominating

Merion Deanery presents

SPRING BENEFIT

Friday April 11

6:30- 9:00pm

Church of the Good Shepherd
1116 E Lancaster Ave • Rosemont, PA

A special fundraising dinner
for the students of
St. James School
in Philadelphia

Enjoy an evening of fellowship with
dinner and entertainment
with neighbors from the deanery and
diocese for this special cause.

Featuring The Singing Vicars
The Reverends Frank Allen,
Kevin Moroney and Hillary Raining

Special remarks from
St. James School
Head of School David Kasievich

Wine by Moore Brothers Wine and
Dinner by the St. David's Chefs

Questions? George Vosburgh
610-724-1925 • gbvosburgh@aol.com