

# FELLOWSHIP

## NEWCOMER PROFILE

PEOPLE MAKING THE REDEEMER THEIR FAITH COMMUNITY

INTERVIEWED BY KEN GARNER



**This month we welcome Julie Wolman and Dan King.**

**How long have you been attending services here?**

We first attended a service in March 2016, as part of our “church shopping” activity that we began last year when we moved to the Philadelphia area.

**Are you life-long Episcopalians?**

We are not life-long Episcopalians, but we did attend the Cathedral of St. Paul in Erie before our most recent move.

**What is your previous church experience?**

Julie was raised in a secular home; but she attended church regularly with her neighbor and best friend’s family at Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. As an adult, she became a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church, then the United Church of Christ, and—finally—the Episcopal Church.

Dan’s background is even more circuitous. He was raised in an Assembly of God home. In high school he joined the Methodist Church; in college converted to Roman Catholicism. Later, Dan belonged to United Church of Christ congregations and—as a first “retirement activity”—attended Andover Theological School, a UCC seminary to prepare for the Christian ministry; after two years of seminary he instead returned to work in his secular career.

**How did you find The Redeemer?**

Our “church shopping” was pretty systematic. We had decided that we wanted to look at Episcopal congregations and so we first explored parishes through the Internet. We looked first for churches that appeared to have a vibrant and active congregational life, then we tried to assess whether the commu-

nity’s social perspective matched ours and if the liturgy was both aesthetically satisfying and intellectually stimulating. So, like all of the other churches we visited, the website was our first source of information and our basis for the decision to make a visit.

**What inspired you to attend?**

The Redeemer . . . what a special place. We felt welcomed from the time we first came through the door. Then, the music . . . it inspires! The preaching is so very well done, it speaks to our intellect as well as to our spirit. A special place . . . rare, in fact: we always leave The Redeemer both stirred and challenged to be better Christians.

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

We do tell others about The Redeemer. We tell them that we’re sure they’ll discover what we discovered: a welcoming, vibrant, aesthetically inspiring, intellectually challenging, and meaningful congregation.

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

We were married five years ago during a church service at Old South Church in Boston. (Some of our fellow congregants said it was the most welcome “sermon” they’d had at Old South!) Between us we have four children. Julie’s two daughters live in Boston—one is a mental health counselor, the other is completing her senior year at Harvard as a mechanical engineering major. Dan’s younger son is a carpenter, living in Cleveland; his older son is a professor of Italian at Trinity College in Hartford.

We moved to Philadelphia last year when Julie took the Presidency of Widener University. The complexities of that job combined with leadership responsibilities regionally and nationally keep her busy about 14 hours a day . . . not a lot of time left for hobbies, but an occasional dinner at a fine restaurant is a real treat. Prior to her appointment at Widener, Julie served as president at Edinboro University; before she was a vice president at Boston’s Wheelock College, and a dean and faculty member at Rhode Island College. Dan is a mostly-retired former university faculty member and administrator. He now serves as President/CEO of the American Association of University Administrators; and he teaches occasionally for both Widener University and Gwynedd Mercy University. Our current “family” includes three other dependents—Leila, a nine-year old cocker spaniel; and two, two-year old Saint Bernards (Oliver and Mallory). Keeping up with them sometimes feels like full-time work, but many days Dan wants to add a fourth to fill out a canine quartet.

## RECENT OUTREACH PROJECTS

### Episcopal Community Services

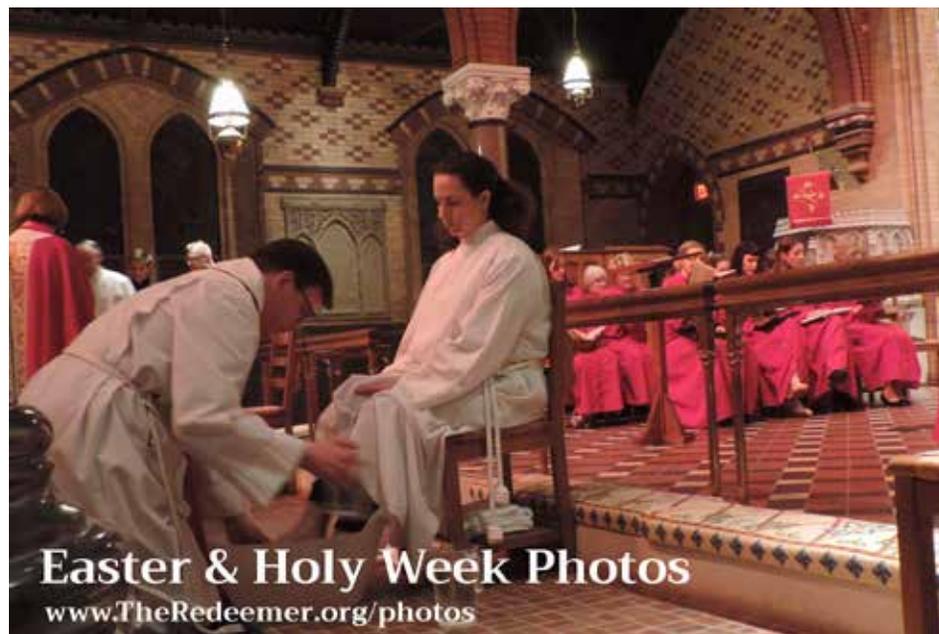
Cleaning Supplies  
Led by Marlies Lissack

Parishioners filled three baskets with cleaning supplies plus cash for one additional basket. Through this effort, ECS was able to provide four women with supplies for their new homes.

### St. James School

Sports Equipment  
Led by Elizabeth Vandiver

St. James was thrilled to have their wish list filled. They were incredibly grateful and appreciative to The Redeemer.



## SINGING THROUGH HOLY WEEK

### A PERSPECTIVE FROM THE CHOIR

BY TRISH BENNETT

Pontius Pilate cast a longer shadow than he could ever have foreseen. Some 2,000 years after the Fifth Prefect of the Roman province of Judea (A.D. 26 – 36), uttered his famous query, “What is truth?” we’re still looking for the answer.

Seldom, however, is there ever “THE” answer. Most often, “truth” emerges from a mish-mash of small observations, and vague certainties. Journalists know truth can be elusive, hence our credo, “If your mama says she loves you, check it out.”

Come Holy Week, Redeemer choir members also know that the truth of Easter emerges in myriad, often unlooked-for ways.

First, there is the prosaic truth of our binders. They hold our music for Holy Week: reams of it. Sometimes they also hold anthems from last year’s Garden Party concert and the 2012 Christmas Vespers service. Singers are dedicated, but to the despair of Michael Diorio, not always tidily organized.

There is also the truth of warped time. In the midst of Lent, we begin Easter rehearsals. At one moment we rehearse Jesus’ plaintive cries in Pablo Casals’ “O Vos Omnes” (“O ye people passing . . . are my sorrows of nothing to you?”); in the next, we sing triumphant Hallelujahs in that chorus from Handel’s “Messiah,” and from

Beethoven’s “Mount of Olives.” Time seems at once to expand and contract.

And there is the truth of duality: of being both worship leaders and worshippers. How do we do that? At the same time? Few of us, I think, can sing Bach’s “Herzliebster Jesu,” (“Ah, holy Jesus, how has thou offended, that man to judge thee, hath in hate pretended?”) and not sense the pangs of Christ’s death. Yet we know it must be the music that takes precedence, and the best rendering of it, not our particular feelings.

A Holy Week reality is a consciousness of ceremony, lived as few other times in our lives, or generally in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century world we inhabit.

We deliberately process in silence; enact rituals pregnant with meaning, such as Maundy Thursday’s footwashing. We watch ourselves and our fellow parishioners partake in these familiar rites, yet fresh, year after year, and are conscious of a marvelous continuum of which we are a part: that had its origins long before our birth and will continue long after our departures.

In ritual, word and music, then, the choirs, from 7 to 70 +-year-olds, journey together, and with our Redeemer family, through the small truths of Holy Week to reach, re-echo and rejoice in the best answer to Pilate’s question: The Truth is that the Lord is risen; He is risen indeed.

