

FELLOWSHIP

NEWCOMER PROFILE

PEOPLE MAKING THE REDEEMER THEIR FAITH COMMUNITY.

INTERVIEWED BY KEN GARNER



Becky Best & Charles Amis

We begin a new series in *Voice of The Redeemer*, Newcomer Profiles.

We thank Charles Amis and Becky Best very much for sharing their story with us about their entry into The Redeemer community.

How long have you been attending services here?

We moved to Bryn Mawr in the beginning of 2012 and we've been attending since the first Sunday after our arrival.

Are you a life-long Episcopalian? If not, have you had religious affiliations before becoming involved at The Redeemer? If so, what other Episcopal churches have you attended?

Charles: I was raised an Episcopalian growing up. In fact, I was an acolyte at St. Ann's in Old Lyme with Peter Vanderveen! However, after I moved to college, I stopped going to church. It wasn't for any strong reason, it was mainly laziness and immaturity, which I think a lot of people can relate to. It was only recently when Becky and I met in 2009 that we both decided to seek out a faith community together.

Becky: I grew up in a Baptist church, but after going to Tibet in college I began a process of reexamining my faith. Shortly after Charles and I started dating, we found we shared an interest in nurturing our spiritual lives, but didn't

yet have a place to do that together. We attended Unitarian Universalist churches in Manhattan for two years, but never quite felt at home there. The Redeemer is the first church we feel we have a home at, and the first Christian church I've felt comfortable in in a long time.

How did you find The Redeemer? What attracted you to attend?

Charles: When my father learned that Becky and I were moving to Bryn Mawr, he checked to see if there was an Episcopal parish there out of curiosity. My father was an Episcopal priest long ago and is now a faithful parish member of Grace Episcopal in Hartford, CT, so I think he's always hoped I might return to an Episcopal church one day although he's never said so. When he discovered that Peter Vanderveen was the rector at The Redeemer, he just had to let me know the incredible coincidence. I checked out the website and loved the choral music and a sermon I found (Nov. 13, 2011 for those of you who are curious). I quickly shared the find with Becky and we already knew we wanted to attend even before we got in our U-Haul.

Becky: I was really struck by this quote from the *What We Believe* page of the website which rang true to me: "Belief isn't a set of ideas or propositions. It's rather an approach to life and a dynamic engagement with the mystery of God." In my own history, a preoccupation with propositions has come at the expense of a dynamic relationship with God. When I listened to the sermon Charles sent me, I was really moved by how relevant it was to my life and I wanted to hear more.

What would you tell others about The Redeemer to encourage them to come and check us out?

Charles: It really depends on who I'm talking to, but part of that is because I think so many different people could find a home here. For me, I love to ask ques-

tions and I need a faith community that encourages and supports that. After attending a few Adult Forums, I could tell that this is one of those communities. Becky and I started attending Bible Study as well and I found that the kind of conversations we were having had been missing from my life for far too long. Becky and I were welcomed often and even joined a foyers group early on. The experience of joining a community and really connecting and engaging has never come this easily to us before and I think that makes The Redeemer and everyone here very special.

Becky: The Redeemer is an unusual church in my experience because it is both open to inquiry and change and at the same time deeply rooted in tradition. I think many people can feel adrift without tradition and stifled without flexibility, but at The Redeemer there is space to critically examine things from a grounding in the wisdom of the Bible and the liturgy.

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

Charles: Well, the most exciting thing by far is that Becky and I are engaged to be married at The Redeemer on Dec. 29th! We're busy planning, but it's all coming together. When we moved to Bryn Mawr, I left my job in Manhattan as a game designer and started my own game development studio from home. I work with a team online and most of my world revolves around playing, making, and talking about games.

Becky: Last year, I was a PhD student in Chinese History at Columbia, but I left to pursue my passion in teaching. I moved to Bryn Mawr to take a job at Baldwin teaching Mandarin. Actually, I'm a Baldwin alumna and when I graduated from high school, I never imagined I would be back teaching and living and having my wedding reception at Baldwin, but I couldn't be more pleased. This is an exciting year for me as well because I'm establishing a Mandarin program for the Lower School. I love working with children and I love Mandarin, so I can't wait to get started in the fall.

**Please Join Us!
Sunday September 9**

**P A R I S H
P I C N I C**

**following the
10 am service**

Please help us by bringing food items that do not require warm-up.

If your last name begins with:

A – I Desserts

J – R Entrées

S – Z Salads

**THE REDEEMER
MISSIONS EXPOSITION
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30
10:15am to Noon**

Embrace, Engage and Be Enriched

New energy is pulsing through The Redeemer and program staff is taking a new approach to the ministry fair that usually occurs in conjunction with the fall start-up picnic. This year the picnic is scheduled for September 9 on the lawn and will be focused on reconnecting and enjoying one another's company. The "soul" focus that day is *FELLOWSHIP!* On September 30, we plan to showcase the vibrancy of The Redeemer's innumerable offerings in the Parish House Assembly and Conference Rooms. Fun features will include:

- Smart phone codes for each offering. (Scanning instantly reveals additional important info.)
- Cappuccino bar and other delightful treats
- A raffle
- Personal chats with program and group leaders

CHURCH SCHOOL PARENTS PARTY

celebrating a
New Church School Year
Saturday, September 15
5-7 pm

Home of Ellen and James Wang
1346 Partridge Lane
Villanova, PA 19085

Hosts: Ellen and James Wang and
Diane and David Senior



Scene from the 2010 party.

RSVP by Monday, September 10: www.TheRedeemer.org/rsvp or e-mail tish@theredeemer.org
Childcare will be available in the Parish House, 230 Pennswood Road, Bryn Mawr from 4:45 to 7:15 pm. If you plan to use it, please let us know the names of your children and their ages when you respond.

SAVE THE DATES

Friday, November 16

Christmas Outreach Party

Merion Cricket Club
Live and Silent Auctions
Dinner and Christmas Cheer

Saturday, November 17

Christmas Bazaar

Parish House
Attic Treasures, Vintage, Toys, Books,
Silent Auction, The Shop, Lunch,
Plants, Gifts and other activities!

We have already started collecting for Attic Treasures and are looking for Silent and Live Auction Items for Friday and Saturday.

• **Contact Anne Barnett** at 610-642-2057 or anbarnett@gmail.com for pick-up information for Attic Treasures.

• **Contact Carolyn Morris** at 610-525-5240 or Missc@comcast.net regarding Silent and Live Auction Items (including tickets to sports and other events, jewelry, vacation homes, antiques, etc.)

Please consider offering your help and donations. These events are critical to fundraising for our parish missions and to the support of outside entities funded by our outreach grants.

