A Message from Pastor Karsten:
The political process matters, and it does not begin in November

Elections are vehicles to create the conditions to co-govern with our elected leaders. Beyond just casting a vote, having a set of values and priorities to guide our decisions and the conversation we have with candidates is significant. There is a Faith Agenda that has been shaped by many faith traditions ahead of this next election which lays out areas for elected officials to address in order to build a Caring Economy and Multi-Racial Democracy in Minnesota. (See inside for a more detailed description of this Faith Agenda.)

To help engage in the process, and to lift up these Faith Values with those seeking election, I want to encourage you to be part of your caucus meeting (whichever party you may affiliate with) coming up on Monday February 25. In order to understand the importance of these caucus meetings and to be better able to understand the Faith Agenda and engage well as a leader or squad member, Our Redeemer is hosting a morning training session on Tuesday, February 11, from 9:00 to 11:15 a.m. in our Blue/Gray Room. Through this time together, with a staff person from Isaiah, we can be well equipped to create the conditions to co-lead with our elected leaders, and we can win unprecedented victories that transform the lives of every Minnesotan.

HERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT THE CAUCUS AND CONVENTIONS PROCESS - The path through caucuses and party conventions is the most important opportunity we have to reshape what is possible in Minnesota through 2020 and 2021. Isaiah is uniquely positioned for a power breakthrough around this path because they have the biggest base of committed and disciplined leaders across the state. Candidates for the State House and State Senate are focused on trying to win the endorsement of their party at their endorsing conventions after caucuses. This means that the constituency to which they feel most accountable is senate endorsing convention delegates.

The goal is to turn out at least 5,000 leaders to go caucus and to move forward to their Congressional District and State Convention (later Spring) of whichever party they want, so that we will be the most powerful bloc of delegates in each endorsing convention. We want to use our collective power through being delegates at endorsing conventions to form candidates to lead boldly around our vision for Minnesota and to commit to make our agenda a reality in 2021 if they are elected.

Come and step into the process to let strong values lead us to important collaboration with those who would like out vote. Please join me and several others who will be at the February 11 training. If you cannot make that date or want more information about Isaiah or the Faith Agenda, check out www.isaiahmn.org.
A Message from Deacon Jennifer Schneider: Love Through a New Lens

The kids had a short break from school at the end of the semester, so we packed up and headed to the Minnesota Science Museum. We explored exhibits on trading posts, Native American lands, and early years in America. At another exhibit, we jumped to dunk a basketball with Magic Johnson and tested our balance with Simone Biles. Everything was great.

What really struck me was the exhibit RACE: Are We So Different? To give you a backdrop, here is an excerpt from the Science Museum of Minnesota’s website: “We all know that people look different. Throughout history, those differences have been a source of strength, community, and personal identity. They have also been the basis for discrimination and oppression. And while those differences are socially and culturally real, modern scientific understanding tells us race and human variation are complex, and challenges us to think in new ways.”

Sometimes our hearts are hardened by our perceptions of others who are different from us - whether the difference lies in skin color, religion, political leanings, or socioeconomic status. We often carry a single story* of what those differences mean and allow that single story to shape our feelings and actions toward others. But deep down, we are all children of the same God. We are all dearly loved by God. How can we love our neighbor more deeply?

When we open ourselves to learning about others, hearing their stories and experiences, and sharing our own, we build deeper relationships with others. This breaks down the barrier of otherness between us. This helps us to love our neighbors on Larpenteur Avenue and beyond in a Christ-like way. In the Young Adult group, we are learning how to do accompaniment - that is asking deep and thoughtful questions of another person and truly listening to them without passing judgement or offering our own input.

I encourage you to find ways to listen and learn about someone in your neighborhood or even at ORLC who you do not know well. I encourage you to find ways to learn about their story and see the value in them as a child of God. And, if you get the chance, head on down to the RACE exhibit at the MN Science Museum. It is well worth your time.

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Annual Meeting Review

We had our Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 26, between services, and with 48 people in attendance, we approved minutes from our past June meeting, reviewed the 2019 financial situation and proposed 2020 budget, and filled vacant Board positions. Pastor Karsten shared a review of the year in a picture presentation and spoke about three aspects of Our Redeemer – being a Beautiful Church, a Changing Church, and a Serving Church. Deacon Jennifer talked about various work that she had led over the year especially highlighting ministry with families and young adults, and sharing more about various collaborative efforts. Board members Dean Ersfeld and Hilary Hinrichs presented the 2019 financial situation, which resulted in a deficit for the first time in over ten years, and proposed 2020 budget where funds were used from various dedicated accounts to help cover expenses, resulting in less of a budget deficit of $6,500, which was approved. We said thank you to our outgoing Board members (Diane Derks, Ed Holzbauer, and Rob Barrett) while reelecting Dean Ersfeld to a three-year term as Treasurer, and electing Roy Wong, Michele Rebholz, and Baryogar Johnson to three-year terms on the Board. The final agenda item was the announcement that a Long-Range Planning Team has been created to address the 2020 shortfall and develop an outlook to 2025 focusing on membership numbers, projected budgets, and ministry direction.

* Definition of Single Story in a blog by Julian Abagond: The single story is where the same story gets told over and over again about a people or a place we do not know first-hand.
Long-Range Planning Team
It is always hard to know what the future will hold for us as individuals or for organizations, but Our Redeemer’s newly-formed Long-Range Planning Team is going to lean into this important task. Setting ourselves on a good course, being mindful of the changes and challenges for congregational vitality, exploring future possibilities for staffing, budgeting, and membership scenarios, addressing our current financial situation, and staying focused on “being” the church—not just trying to “save” our church—will be the wide task of this group. There are six people who have already stepped up to be part of this team, and we ask that you keep them in your prayers for wisdom, discernment, and inspired direction. They will begin meeting regularly in February and will bring news and insights through the newsletter and other modes of sharing. One main goal is to bring an initial, detailed report to the congregation at our June semi-annual meeting. If you are interested in being part of this group, please contact Pastor Karsten or Hilary Hinrichs.

Doulos Service Learning Trip – March 27 to April 4
Come and enjoy an intergenerational mission trip opportunity to Doulos Discovery School in the Dominican Republic. We will be heading down for learning about this ministry and culture, while engaging in various service projects for the campus and community – these will tap the interests/gifts/abilities of those who come. The days will have time to be on site with the students and staff, hours of great eating and hanging out together, time for reflection and conversations, one fun escape day, and much more.

This will be a shared trip with an intergenerational group from Prairie Lutheran in Eden Prairie. The cost for the trip will be about $1,800 which covers airfare, lodging, all food and travel in the country. Some scholarships are available. Please give some prayerful consideration to this opportunity. If you are interested in learning more about the trip, please email Pastor Karsten at karstenn@comcast.net or call 651-271-5134, but do so soon as we are preparing to buy tickets the first week of February.

Lent is around the corner
Wednesday, February 26, is Ash Wednesday, and the beginning of the season of Lent for us with worship at 6:30 p.m. Lent is always a time of more personal reflection around our faith, as well as a time for many to take on a special discipline like fasting, prayer, devotions, solitude or the giving up of some food or hobby for these six weeks until Easter on April 12.

Having this special time of Lent to focus on our faith and the way we will faithfully live in the world is significant as it is meant to create more space in our lives to tend to our spiritual life. Here are a couple of things happening this Lent at Our Redeemer:

- Lenten Worship times on Wednesday nights at 6:30 p.m.
- Sunday Forum on February 9, at 9:45 a.m., to hear more about spiritual disciplines.
- A One-Day Retreat nearby at the Benedictine Center on Saturday, February 15 (info on next page)

Sunday Morning Lenten Study
Beginning Sunday, March 1, at 9:45 a.m., in the Blue/Gray Room, we hope you will join us as we prepare to take on special discipline actions in our personal lives around beliefs and faith. What is our hope? What is your hope? Even in challenging times, we believe in God, and we have hope in the work God is doing in the world: safety and stability for refugees and migrants; the renewal of the earth; and sufficient livelihood for all. These are just a few of the things of which we dream, fueled by the Holy Spirit. This Lent join the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) World Hunger as we journey with our neighbors in hope for a just world where all are fed. The Study group will meet in the Blue/Gray Room and held March 1 through April 5. A form to sign up will be at the Welcome Desk.

XOXO Valentine’s Fundraiser for CYF
Thanks to all who purchased heart cookies. Pick up your order on Sunday, February 9. Proceeds support Children Youth and Family Ministry scholarships for youth taking a service learning trip to Memphis in June and Bible Camp in August.

LEAP YEAR—We are blessed with an Extra Day to Spread Blessings!
February 29 is a blessing—let’s make it a blessing for others. Each week in the bulletin, let’s suggest ideas to spread our faith and bless others. Send your ideas to Sally or post them in the Narthex on the special poster.
A One-Day Retreat Opportunity
On Saturday, February 15, 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at the Benedictine Retreat Center (2675 Benet Rd, Maplewood), you can launch your journey toward Easter this year by making room for resurrection inside. Come enjoy the time away with Joel Warne who is the co-founder of WellSpring Life Resources and for 40 years has helped hungry hearts live and serve more fully out of their identity in Jesus Christ. Join Pastor Karsten and others from the Spiritual Growth Team for this day. Cost is $25. Please register with Sally.

All of us experience critical seasons when we’re ready for God’s new life to spring forward inside. Our seasons amazingly mirror distinct stages, or seasons of Jesus’ journey from his Passion and Resurrection to the fullness of Pentecost. How do Jesus’ seasons transfuse our human journey with power and meaning to live the life we’re yearning for?

The Seasons:
- CANA - Life is good, things are progressing, my problems are fixable
- GOOD FRIDAY - Calamity, the death of something precious, the burial of the seed
- EASTER SUNDAY - God offering new life for my changed situation
- THE 40 DAYS - Mourning the death of the old, adjusting to the new
- ASCENSION - Releasing the old, letting it “ascend” with Jesus
- PENTECOST - Receiving the fullness of God’s Spirit into my real situation

This retreat helps unpack the special rhythms of Jesus’ life that offer transformation to ours. It helps us relax and make peace with our real lives, unfolding God’s movement in them in growing power and meaning for vocations, relationships, marriages, calling, service, and much more!

Sign Up with the Couples Group to Pack Food at FMSC
Please join our Couples Group (formerly “S” Connections Ministry Group) to pack food on Saturday, February 15, 1:00-2:30 p.m. at the Feed My Starving Children site, 401 93rd Avenue NW, in Coon Rapids. Following the packing event, the group will gather for a meal at the Tavern Grill in Arden Hills. Packing spaces are limited to 16 so sign up on the form at the Welcome Desk, as well as if you plan to attend the gathering afterwards—sign up to go to both or either one. This is NOT limited to couples—all are welcome!

Game Day on President’s Day
Mark your calendar for Monday, February 17, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. for an afternoon of fun and games. The Children Youth and Family are sponsoring a day of activities and food for all ages. Details are in the works. If you have questions, contact Deacon Jennifer at jennifer@orlcmn.org.

Pajamas and Books for Kids in Need & Wear Pajamas to Church!
February is pajama month! We will be collecting NEW pajamas and books for the entire month to donate to the Pajama Program: MN Chapter. The Pajama Program gives pajamas and books to vulnerable children in transition so they have nightly bedtime rituals that offer a consistent, reassuring “comfort zone” at the end of each day. Please help us collect these wonderful gifts to help children have a good night — preparing them for a good day that leads to a better life. Also, JOIN US on Sunday, February 23 and wear your pajamas to church! During Sunday School that day, the kids will get to watch a movie and eat popcorn in their jammies.

Second Harvest Heartland Volunteers—Join ORLCs Kingdom Assignment Ministry
Come join our FUN team at Second Harvest Heartland on Tuesday, February 4, and again on March 10, 5:30—7:30 p.m.! We have spots to fill—bring your family and friends, but remember to sign them up at the Welcome Desk, or contact Amy Krohn at ajkrohn@hotmail.com.

Sympathy to the Family of Pauline Halverson
Our long-time church member of nearly 63 years, Pauline Halverson, passed away the evening of Sunday, January 26, at the age of 90. Her husband, Ken, passed away less than two years ago. Please join us in keeping their surviving family members in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

ORLC Serving at Dorothy Day (Richard M. Schultze Family Foundation St. Paul Opportunity Center and Dorothy Day Residence)
On Monday, February 24, consider joining our Our Redeemer Hunger Team as we prepare and serve a delicious meal to people who are experiencing homelessness and poverty. The experience is a gift to us as they are so thankful for the food we provide. We are humbled as we receive “Thank You” and “God Bless You” from many of them. The number of people being served is trending up since opening of the new St. Paul Opportunity Center and Dorothy Day Residence. The volunteers were amazed by the incredible new kitchen and the dining hall that seats up to 350 people. We couldn’t do this ministry without the great volunteers, and those who donate to the noisy offering to help fund this important program. As always, a special thanks to Thrivent Financial for making grants possible to help with the costs.

Watch the weekly bulletins for a March OWLS event on Thursday, March 19, to Len Busch Roses & lunch at Embers!
Photo Sessions for New Church Directory
Dates are scheduled for March 27 & 28 to have your photo taken for our new church directory. Available slots are Friday 2-9 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m.—5 p.m. Go online to reserve your preferred time, or sign up on the form at the Welcome desk. Contact Sally if you have questions. Here's the link: http://bit.ly/ORLCpicture

God's Hands Knitting and Crocheting
The God's Hands Knitting & Crocheting Group meets on the third Thursday of each month from 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Caribou Coffee on White Bear Avenue and County Road D (by Maplewood Mall). We bring our work “in progress,” be it a scarf, chemo hat, dishcloth, slippers, baby sweater or a pattern that we might need some help following. Most of the handiwork is done elsewhere, but it is fun to see the current projects. We love Show ’n Tell! We share conversation, patterns, ideas, and sometimes yarn.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry continues at ORLC. If you know of a need, please let the office know. Six shawls were given out in 2019, making the total well over 70 since this small but valuable ministry was created in 2008. Various items have been given to Alley Shoppe & Bundles of Love, among other non-profits that have touched our hearts.

Please join this fun group of different skill levels. Come and check us out on February 20, March 19, April 16, May 21, etc. We hope to see you there!

Monthly Scrapbooking/Crafting Saturday
If you would like a day out of the house to work on your scrapbooking or other craft project, come to Our Redeemer on Saturday, February 15, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. You can bring others with you as well!

TOPS Weight Loss Group
Are you still working on that one New Year’s resolution to take off pounds but not having success on your own? Remember that a local chapter of Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) meets weekly at Our Redeemer on Mondays from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. This is an affordable, non-profit, weight-loss support and wellness organization. Visitors are always welcome! For more information, check out their website at tops.org or contact Janet Johnson at 651-771-1029 or at janet420@hotmail.com.

Kids' Cartooning Class at ORLC
From January 29 to February 26, Our Redeemer will be welcoming the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation to provide kids, ages 6-14, free classes on cartooning each Wednesday, 6:00-7:00 p.m. They will learn the basics of cartooning and creating their own characters using the following techniques: characteristics, exaggeration, action and personification. Register through the Saint Paul Parks & Recreation. Questions? Call the Hayden Heights Recreation Center at 651-298-5716.

Young Adult Collab
Join others in their 20s-30s-40s for fun, free food, and conversation. We meet once a month on the fourth Thursday, the next one on February 27 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. If you have questions, contact Deacon Jennifer at jennifer@orlc.org.
## February 2020 - Worship Assistants and Readings

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<td><strong>Hospitality/Kitchen Help</strong></td>
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<td>Jan &amp; Dennis Peterson</td>
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<td>Carol Rodriguez</td>
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### More Free Money?

**Thrivent members:** Now that 2019 is over, please check your accounts again for any Choice Dollars waiting to be designated. Thanks!

### Financial Snapshot:

We approved our 2020 budget this year with a $6,505.68 expected shortfall. As we continue to work together to provide ministry for our redeemer, we thank you for your continued faithfulness towards our mission of being a church that makes a difference in our community.

### Shutterfly Shoppers—8% of your purchases goes to ORLC

Another new way to help bring money to Our Redeemer is ordering through **Shutterfly**—the church will receive *8 percent* of all sales from anyone who places orders through our special Shutterfly storefront only by using our following designated link: [http://orlcmn.shutterflystorefront.com/](http://orlcmn.shutterflystorefront.com/). Share it on Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest asking your family, friends, and coworkers to shop through it as well!

### Thank you for your support of Our Redeemer!

Contributions can be debited automatically from your checking or savings account or processed once using your card. Our electronic giving program offers convenience for you and much needed donation consistency to our congregation. We appreciate your gifts! Email lisa@orlcmn.org for further information.

### GIFT CARDS!

A reminder to purchase gift cards on the first Sundays of every month! We have several on hand OR you may special order others from a list of hundreds of retailers. (Check with our gift card representatives or the office for a full list.) Remember that the **Bucks for Our Building** program provides our church with a percentage of the gift card value. The more you buy, the more we earn!