

Sr. Warden Report – 2020

Lee Darrow Sr. Warden

This has certainly been a year to remember (or maybe to forget??)! That said, the good news is we continued to carry on and spread God's work here, and in the community, in spite of the challenges we've faced. This past year we adapted on the fly to become almost overnight a "virtual" parish, successfully addressing the multiple challenges that this presents. We've become expert Zoomers, on-line streamers, and re-discovered the telephone. We've experienced glitches in these undertakings, we've corrected them, and made the processes better. What more could we ask? We can celebrate our accomplishments!

We started off 2020 with several pre-COVID efforts:

- We successfully installed a payroll accounting module that made many of our administrative book-keeping functions more robust and hopefully easier. Many thanks to JP McGlinn, Deb Randall, Steve Daniel for the time and effort they spent on this project.
- While consolidating the budget on the new accounting systems, we assessed the many individual line-item accounts in the parish accounting system. We combined similar accounts and eliminated no longer used accounts as a means to create a more logical and accurate representation of all our funds.
- We explored ways to create a property focused development plan. Almost simultaneously with the onset of COVID, we explored working with the Vandersall Collective, a group which specializes in organizational development. The goal was to partner with someone who could help us create a more comprehensive development plan for the parish that would allow better parish access and use by community. This effort is now on hold until COVID loosens its hold on the parish.
- We welcomed a new parish intern, Phillip Lineau, whom many of you have "virtually" met, and seen during our on-line liturgies

We were on a roll, and then COVID struck, and in spite of it, we carried on! Here is a summary some of our "COVID-tide" efforts:

- The top priority, post COVID invasion, was implementing on-line worship Streaming. Fr. Jed, Chris Donley, and JP McGlinn used their expertise to set up Facebook live streaming. They implemented major network improvements to support this, including adding additional wi-fi access points for a stronger signal and installing a robust audio interface and camera to improve the virtual experience. This is an ongoing effort, where we continue to see new improvements to the streaming experience as the weeks pass. Thank you to Fr. Jed, Chris and JP for all their efforts!
- Fr. Jed suggested that we form Grape Bunches which are several small parish groups who could touch base with one another just to visit, share experiences and keep connected. Our groups were randomly selected and divided among the vestry members who would start the process. The groups use different methods to keep in touch, and it has become a successful way to connect during these times of social distancing.

- In addition to Grape Bunches, Fr. Jed also conducted virtual Zoom Town Hall events, where parishioners with on-line access could join to visit in small “break-out” groups and convene together as one parish group during the meeting. Thanks to Fr. Jed’s technical expertise, these Town Halls continue to evolve into even more unique and satisfying ways to keep connected with one another. Fr. Jed is now exploring ways to share these meetings with those who don’t have on-line access.
- The vestry met weekly via Zoom during the first 6+ months of our church building closure to address this new COVID reality and keep Redeemer functioning.
- We formed an “in-reach committee” to help develop ways to assure that all parishioners have a way to connect with Redeemer. This remains a work in progress. I know that several of you reach out to those who are not connected on-line and I thank you for thinking of those who don’t have this access – it is so appreciated!
- In June, after the death of George Floyd, we erected a huge “Black Lives are Sacred” banner in our parking lot, and formed an ad-hoc Racial Justice team (Lee Darrow, Eivind Nilsen, Chris Donley, Mark Phillips) to explore ways Redeemer could support our BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) brothers/sisters in the parish and in our community. We developed an action model rooted in our faith to serve as the basis for our activities (Matthew 25:35-40 “I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.....”). We chose three areas of focus which we will flesh out in the coming year: *systemic change*, *care for the environment* and *direct assistance for those in need*. My sincere thanks to Eivind, Chris and Mark for their thoughtful approach to this task.
- One proposed possible longer term activity is participating in the Episcopal Church’s “Sacred Ground” program. <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/sacred-ground/> This program is a dialogue series on race, grounded in faith. Small groups are invited to walk through chapters of America’s history of race and racism, while weaving in threads of family story, economic class, and political and regional identity. More information will be coming on this but click on the link above to find out more.
- For the short term, we invite any parishioners who wish to become actively involved in addressing social justice to connect with two networks that actively address these issues:
 - a. Faith Action Network (<https://fanwa.org>) – an organization of interfaith communities in Washington who partner together to become “a powerful voice of the faithful building a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world.”
 - b. Episcopal Public Policy Network – “A grassroots network of Episcopalians across the country dedicated to carrying out the Baptismal Covenant call to strive for justice and peace through the active ministry of public policy advocacy.”
 - i. A search on “Episcopal Public Policy Network” will bring you to the Episcopal Advocacy website. Enter your email address to sign up for emails on current issues being addressed and how you can become involved.

We continued our outreach to the community and to the world even while constrained by COVID.

- We accessed our Outreach fund to grant a \$3000 scholarship to two young women for study at Kilimatende School of Nursing and Midwifery to become midwives. Both students were doing well academically while living on campus and gaining clinical

experience in nearby hospitals. However, with COVID, the women had to leave campus and continue their studies from home. Our outreach fund enabled us to wire \$2200 additional funds for the purchase of two laptop computers, enabling the students to successfully continue their studies.

- On the home front, Susan Switzer coordinated a school supplies drive for shelter families, working with teachers to identify needed items. Parishioners ordered supplies directly from a list on Amazon or accessed a link on our Redeemer Giving Page of the parish web site for monetary donations. Kudos to Susan for her work on this project.
- Michelle Terry Henderson and Deb Randall helped coordinate our COVID-tide Christmas giving for Hopelink Kenmore Shelter. Links to Hope Link were established on our website for giving gifts. Thank you, Michelle for your hard work and to all those who donated gifts and funds.
- At Thanksgiving and Christmas, Deb Randall coordinated the monetary gifts for Hopelink Kenmore Shelter, donated directly to Redeemer. We received \$2300 total, which Deb converted to Safeway grocery cards for the purchase of Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner groceries. This took the place of our usual gift baskets. My thanks to Deb for her efforts and to all of you for your support of HopeLink.

Stewardship was also active this year, even during COVID-tide.

- We introduced an on-line giving link on our website, that will allow for automatic pledge withdrawal from parishioner bank accounts.
- Matt Terry, Lee Darrow, and Steve Daniel planned our annual Stewardship event. This year, an online link was added to the Redeemer home page to allow electronic submission of annual pledge cards. My thanks to the team for their planning, and to all of you for your generous pledges which made our pledge drive a success.

One last financial note: even COVID cannot keep us away from our annual audit! Steve Daniel and Lee Darrow met in August (being properly socially distanced and sporting appropriate PPE of course!) to perform the audit. I especially want to thank Deb Randall for the tremendous amount of prep work she performed to help us complete the audit quickly and efficiently.

Lastly, in closing, I want to tell you that I've been honored and humbled to be your Sr. Warden these past 3 years. I give my thanks to Fr. Jed for his leadership and dedication to Redeemer. His incredibly hard work to support us spiritually and emotionally has been especially difficult during this past year, and I truly appreciate it.

I also want to thank all the vestry members I've had the privilege to work with, for their focused efforts toward bringing God's work alive at Redeemer and beyond, and for their dedication to Redeemer. Most importantly, I so appreciate all that you, our parish family, do to bring God's work, God's hope, and God's comfort to our parish and to the community. I thank each and every one of you for your efforts during this time of COVID separation. We wouldn't be the parish we are today without you!

Lee