



PARISH PARCHMENT



Holy Redeemer
Lutheran Church

www.holyredeemer.church

Growing to and for Christ!

January 2021

In this Issue:

	<u>Page</u>
Council Corner	2
Synod News	2
Outreach	3
Adult News	4
Miscellaneous	5
Merry Christmas	8
Future Events	9

When the [magi] saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road. Matthew 2:10-12

Dear Beloved Community of HRLC,

In December 2020, there was a convergence of sorts. On December 21st, Winter Solstice, (the shortest day or the longest night) of the year, the planets of Saturn and Jupiter appeared to be closer together than they had since 1623 and the closest observable since 1226. The next time this happens, it will be 2080. Scientists called this the Great Conjunction. Others called it the day of the Christmas Star. Millions of people went outside and some took to the hills after sunset, some braving chilly weather and high winds, to catch a glimpse of the Christmas Star. Jack and I went up to the top of Mount Mercy Hill. When we arrived, there were already quite a few other cars and folks gathered as well. Some of them had high-powered telescopes. We had our binoculars. Though the high cloud cover obscured the view, when they cleared we could see the bright light of the two planets in the southwestern night sky. It was beautiful.

For many, the convergence of this bright star on the longest night of the year in the midst of the darkness of an unprecedented pandemic as well as the bright news of vaccines that had been approved, the spiritual significance seemed bright and poignant. Person after person echoed the themes of hope and light at the end of the long dark tunnel in which we have been traveling these last eleven months. The Christmas Star convergence was truly a bright light in the midst of a very dark time in our world.

Some wonder if this was the astrological occurrence around the time that Jesus was born about which Matthew's gospel announces as the star that led the magi to the baby Jesus. It would have been the first Epiphany, a sign that revealed the wonders of God's grace resting in Jesus, pointing to the babe born in Bethlehem. Matthew recalls that after the magi had visited the baby Jesus, *having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.* Having been warned by an angel in a dream about the danger of Herod, Joseph and Mary took baby Jesus and also went another way – seeking safe haven in the land of Egypt.

Sometimes, even though we may have had the best plans and the greatest ideas, something comes along – like a deadly global pandemic – and we have to change direction, chart a new course, make a new path and go another way. As a congregation, we did just that. Like many other congregations and faith communities, we changed the way we were together – though apart – for worship, meetings and other get-togethers. We zoomed, we gathered outside, we made phone calls, sent cards, emails, text messages and connected on social media platforms. We changed direction and went “home by another way” in order to stay safer.

James Taylor put this idea into lyrics and music in his song, *Home by Another Way*. They speak to us as well:

*Those magic men the Magi
Some people call them wise
Or Oriental, even kings
Well anyway, those guys
They visited with Jesus
They sure enjoyed their stay
Then warned in a dream of King Herod's scheme
They went home by another way...*

*It's best to go home by another way
Home by another way
We got this far to a lucky star
But tomorrow is another day
We can make it another way
Safe home as they used to say
Keep a weather eye to the chart on high
And go home another way*

This Epiphany, we'll focus on the bright light of God's love in Jesus. We'll also begin to look ahead, as the vaccine makes its way into our community, and we'll think about "coming home" slowly but surely to our in-person gatherings as safely as possible. It is truly a convergence of hope, light, homecoming and God's great and amazing grace that has carried through this tough time. We once again offer our heartfelt thanks to our health care workers and first responders who have worked for many long months to take care of our loved ones and us, and to the researchers and scientists who worked around the clock to provide a vaccine for us.

Blessings, grace, hope and peace in the name of Jesus,
Pastor Jayne Thompson

Council Corner

Holy Redeemer's Council met on Thursday, December 10. (Meeting minutes were previously sent via email or postal mail, but a few highlights are listed here.)

Suspension: Little has changed regarding the pandemic to warrant changes in our suspension. Current information and trends are not consistent with safely reopening the church to in-person activities, including worship.

Worship will continue to be streamed on Facebook Live on Sunday mornings. If you are unable to join the live stream, you can also watch the recorded version on either Facebook or YouTube later in the week.

The task force will continue to do its work and provide best practice recommendations. Council will continue to evaluate at their regularly scheduled meetings, the next of which is 14 January 2021 (also via Zoom at 7:00 p.m.).

Finances: During the month of November, we exceeded our total budgeted income goal (of \$19,279) by \$5,250. We exceeded general fund budget by \$1,927 and building fund budget by \$3,323.

Annual Meeting: Sunday, January 24 has been set as the date for HRLC's Annual Meeting. This is tentatively scheduled as a Zoom call immediately following worship. Watch you mailbox or email for more details as the date gets closer.

In addition, budget round table meetings will be held Sunday, January 10 and Sunday, January 17. These too are tentatively scheduled as Zoom calls immediately following worship.

Council Minutes: Council minutes, including additional financial details, are sent via email or postal mail approximately one week after the council meetings. If you have any questions, please ask a council member or contact the office.

SE Iowa Synod

Public Health Webinar

After months of distancing, mask-wearing, public health concerns, and changes to worship there are now vaccines for COVID-19 now being administered. Join Lutheran faith leaders from across Iowa to learn from Dr. Ulysses Burley II, former program director for the ELCA Strategy on HIV/AIDS and public health expert, for a discussion about COVID-19 and public gatherings, church activities, and the near future. This event is hosted by the Western Iowa, Southeastern Iowa, and Northeastern Iowa synod.

Thursday, January 14, 2020

6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

via Zoom

For more information and RSVP:

<https://seiasynod.org/covid-public-health-and-the-church/>.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Each January offers an opportunity to celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Many congregations exchange preachers or come together for ecumenical prayer services. Obviously, celebrations will look very different this year because of Covid. The annual brochure jointly prepared and published by the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity and the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches is available for download on the [WCC website](#).

The brochure offers a wealth of material for reflection and prayer on this year's theme from the Gospel of John: "Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit." Perhaps your community will find new and creative ways to express Christian unity through prayer, even while not gathering in person.

Synod Assembly 2021

The Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly will take place on **Saturday, May 22, 2021**. The assembly will take place online. For more information including information about voting members and attendance see the full letter:

<https://app.robly.com/archive?id=2b6232853daf70af94c4b519acd1e9b1&v=true>.

Additional Synod Information

For more information from our synod, visit <https://seiasynod.org/>. There you can find weekly newsletters (<https://seiasynod.org/news-events/news/>), messages from Bishop Current, and a number of resources related to COVID-19 (<https://seiasynod.org/covid-19/>).

Outreach

December Mission of Hope

Thanks to Nicole, Courtney, and Allison for prepping the boxes for our December Mission of Hope meal. One hundred ham and turkey hoagies were made by De, Shari, Jan, Nicole, and Judy.

The Outreach Committee extends their gratitude to Harold & Daphne Miller for giving us a \$250 Thrivent gift card. Nicole was able to purchase the applesauce, cookies, ham, turkey, lettuce, and napkins. The gift card was greatly appreciated.

Thank you to everyone who has donated to the Mission of Hope fund. We could not serve the meals without your help.

The next Mission of Hope will be Thursday, January 21.

4th Sunday Offering

In January, our designated fourth Sunday offering is scheduled for January 24. The proceeds from this offering will go to **Souper Bowl of Caring**.

Souper Bowl of Caring is youth across the nation working to fight hunger and poverty in their own communities around the time of the Super Bowl football game. *“Using the energy of the Super Bowl to mobilize youth in a united national effort to care for people in their local communities who are hungry and those in need.”* HRLC raises monies to benefit Mission Support for Southeastern Iowa Synod.

Grateful Grannies

Thank you to everyone who contributed to Grateful Grannies. A check for \$2,495 was sent to that organization. We received \$1,495 from our special offering. Holy Redeemer was awarded a \$1,000 grant from First Lutheran. The council designated that money for Grateful Grannies.

The following is an update from John Ernst, Grateful Grannies:

“Using a list of students enrolled at Jefferson that were previously Grateful Grannie students/families (once a Grateful Grannie student, always a Grateful Grannie student!), we came up with approximately 50 students, 33 of whom are at Jefferson. The student and siblings will each get a gift card to Wal Mart, and the family is getting a gift card to Hy-Vee for groceries. This seemed to be the best option for keeping everyone safe.

This is significantly different than previous years. Obviously, this means we will not be doing any clothes shopping, no toy shopping, no wrapping, no deliveries to make. Consideration has been given to keeping everyone safe, but also the circumstances at the schools has changed drastically with the derecho.

Please know that while our involvement as a large group is limited right now, hopefully soon we will be able to get back to more normal activities. The need is there, we can certainly find ways to help!

Thanks to all of you for your donations! We were not able to have a fall meeting, but we are still getting donations. A special thank you to the people from Holy Redeemer Church! They have been such a great partner with the toy shopping at Target in the past but have sent a generous donation this year!”

The Outreach Committee thanks everyone who contributed to Grateful Grannies. We are proud to support this wonderful, giving, and caring group of people. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Linn Community Food Bank

As has been reported widely in the news, the pandemic, derecho, and holidays combine to create desperate need for donations at local food banks.

Our next Food Bank weekend (2nd Sunday of the month) is scheduled for January 10. We continue to thank you, as does Linn Community Food Bank, for your generous giving.

How to Give to Special Offerings

To donate to Souper Bowl of Caring, Linn Community Food Bank, or other community partners, simply indicate on your offering envelope, the memo line of your check, or in a separate note. Counters will ensure it gets the proper designation and funds will be sent to the organizations. Thank you for your generous support.

Grateful for Your Generosity

"I have heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God's people. So I never stop being grateful for you, as I mention you in my prayers." -- St. Paul to the church people in Ephesus: Ephesians 1:15-16 CEV

In these challenging times, we are so very grateful for your faithful gifts and support of our common ministry at HRLC. Your generous spirits have empowered us to keep tending to the many needs of our congregation and as well as those places of need in our greater Cedar Rapids community like the Mission of Hope, the Grateful Grannies, the Food Bank and so many more. We echo St. Paul's prayer and will never stop being grateful for you.

Thanks be to God!

Adult News

Small Group & Committee Activities

COVID statistics for Linn County continue to be inconsistent with reopening HRLC to worship at this time. However, limited in-person meetings can be held at the church.

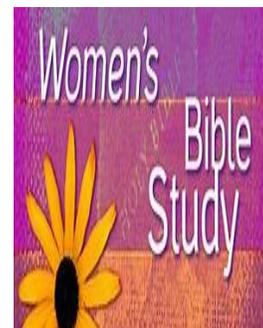
If you would like to meet at the church, please contact Administrative Assistant, Jeff Hand, via email or cell phone (899-7688) for scheduling. This will help us to ensure that we can keep groups distributed on different days and do not have too many people in the building at one time. This is the best way we can care for one another in the coming months.

Guidelines for meeting: Groups must be limited to 10 or fewer people. All individuals must wear a mask and maintain 6 feet of safe distancing at all times. Please limit the length of all meetings and clean all surfaces at the conclusion of your meeting.

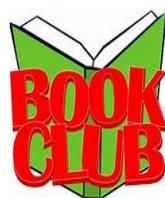
If you have any questions, please contact Jeff or a member of the task force.

Women's Bible Study

The Bible study for January is: *"Journey with Angels."* Session 1, "Looking Up" is written by Christa Von Zychlin. The focus verse is: **"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth. when the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?"** (Job 38:4a, 7)



(Copies are available in the WELCA notebook on the shelf under the women's bulletin board.) If you would like an email copy, please contact Jeff Hand, Administrative Assistant.



WIGS (Book Discussion Group)

The book list has not been posted for 2021 yet.

DUO (Do Unto Others) Day News

The cupboard is bare – so let the sewing begin to fill it up again so we can give more quilts to those who need them. A quilt was given to Lois Shipley's mother who will be 97 in April. She was grateful for the new quilt made by DeAnna Braun. A patriotic quilt (made by Jean Stelling) was sent to Texas to John Black (son of Joyce Black). John served his country in Desert Storm and currently works at Medical City Plano (suburb of Dallas) and is Operations Manger of Surgical Services. Thank you for your service, John.



Let's Do Lunch

Will not meet in January

Raising Our Voice for Iowa Children & Families

Families struggling without access to mental healthcare. Human services providers overworked and underpaid. Former refugees and immigrants striving to build new lives.



These are all issues faced by Iowans. Help us ensure their voices are heard at the Iowa State Capitol.

This legislative session may look different from past years. But now more than ever, Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) will be advocating for our community members who are so often overlooked in our society.

You can join us in this important work. Visit LSIowa.org/advocacy and sign up for our Advocacy Alerts. Learn more about the legislative process, the issues impacting your neighbors, and your role as a citizen in helping to amplify their voices. If you would like more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI's Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations, at Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org or 563-676-2065.

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at LSIowa.org and Facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

Compassion During Crisis

Across the state, LSI team members work with families at risk of child abuse or neglect, connecting them to the tools and resources they need to keep their children in their homes whenever safely possible.

One of the critical programs available to parents is the Strengthening Families program. The program typically provides 14 weeks of in-person parent group work, family activities, and a family meal to enhance child development, help parents create their own support network, and reduce the likelihood of child abuse or neglect.

When COVID-19 created challenges to this in-person model, LSI did not give up on the families who relied on this important service. Instead, LSI's Behavioral Health Intervention Services team has gone virtual.

Maria, a program supervisor with LSI, has been leading a virtual version of the program this year, where families join a Zoom meeting and use "breakout rooms" for individual sessions. Meals are purchased from Hy-Vee and delivered the night of the session, so families are still able to celebrate their tradition of eating together each week.

This year has created several challenges for all of us, but LSI continues to answer the call and provide the high-quality care and services Iowa children and families deserve.

Miscellaneous

In Our Prayers

The **family and friends of Marlin Bohlen** are in our prayers following the death on December 16. Pastor Jayne officiated Marlin's memorial service on Monday, December 21. Marlin's obituary can be found at:

<https://www.cedarmemorial.com/Obituary/2020/Dec/Marlin-M-Bohlen/>.

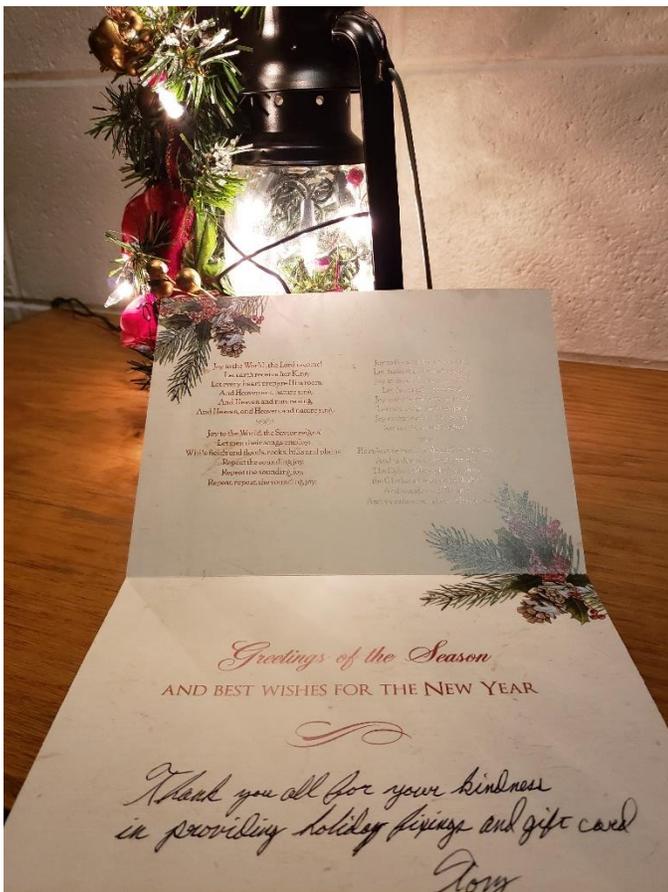
Also in our prayers are **Leona Nigh, Donetta Heathman**, and their family following the death of their daughter and sister, Colleen.



Many Thanks

From Evelyn and Bill Neal: “Thank you to our Holy Redeemer church family for the greeting cards we received for our 90th birthdays. We enjoyed every one!”

From Edgewood Forest: A beautiful Season’s Greetings card (pictures below) was received from Tory (or possibly Tony) Christopherson, with the following note: “Thank you all for your kindness in providing holiday fixings and gift card.”



From Pam & Al Gould: “Thank you to all the dedicated, hard-working members who are taking care of the church’s business during this trying time. Thank you to all those who remembered my birthday with cards and phone calls. We appreciate getting the newsletter every month.

Wishing everyone Happy Holidays and Peace & Harmony in the New Year.”

From Chains Interrupted (Terri Claire, Executive Director):

“Holy Redeemer Friends,
Thank you so much for partnering with Chains Interrupted this past year. During this season of gratitude, I wanted to let you know how much you are appreciated.
Blessings, Terri”

From Ecumenical Community Center Foundation (Robin Switzer Brunner, COO):

“Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church,
Together, we are navigating the pandemic’s fear, illness, and redefinition of our activities, a resulting recession taking our jobs and businesses, agonizing calls for equity and justice, and an inland hurricane destruction of our cities, homes, and trees. Most severely impacted are our most vulnerable neighbors.

In this turbulence, we rise up to encourage one another, sharing our blessing with our sisters and brothers in dire need. With your partnership, prayers and concern, over **1.070 people received over \$68,000** in the first difficult eleven months of 2020.” [...]

Your partnership will never be more valuable.
As we at ECCF celebrate Christmas, we hope you enjoy what is true and honorable, right and pure, lovely and admirable.
Peace, Robin”

Other annual recaps and season’s greetings were received from:

- Hillcrest Family Services
- Waypoint
- Various portions of the ELCA and our synod
- Cedar Rapids Community School Foundation (in relation to Grateful Grannies)

These are in addition to the monthly and quarterly thank you notes we receive from the Linn Community Food Bank, Mission of Hope, and others.

From the Admin Desk: More Thanks



I would like to add my thanks to all of you that make up this great congregation. From your welcoming me as the new Admin Assistant to your kind words and helpfulness throughout the year to the many and varied remembrances of me and my family at Christmas. Thank you for adding something special to 2020.

I will look back on 2020 with a mixed bag of emotions. Some months I won't remember at all, while others I will likely never forget. I was happy to take on this meaningful new job in February. Susan and I enjoyed watching (and even being part of) Matthew's final show choir concert. This was in March and would be the very last "normal" event of his senior year. Talk of the pandemic had already begun and even that concert was in doubt. Spring break followed and the kids would never return to the classrooms. May brought graduation, but not the typical pomp and circumstance. Graduation parties were held throughout the summer – mostly outdoors and generally with masks. In August, as we prepared for Matt to head to Drake and Nick to hybrid (mix of online and classroom) school, the dercho hit and changed everything again. Our home was spared the worst damage, but several days without power – during a pandemic – left us with little to do but so much to get done. It included a trip to an out of town laundromat so we could send Matt to Drake with clean clothes. Kennedy High School was among the worst damaged schools. Only now are we reviewing again what it will be like for Nick to go to hybrid school. The holidays meant small, safe gatherings. And now, as 2020 comes to a close, there is talk of a vaccine and a return to some form of new normalcy on the horizon. A cause for hope in the new year.

But through it all, "God's peace!" Through God and this church, and because of each of you, I have had peace. I pray that 2021 is so much better for all the world, but I trust that no matter what is in store, God will be alongside us offering hope and peace.

Many thanks and happy New Year to you all!

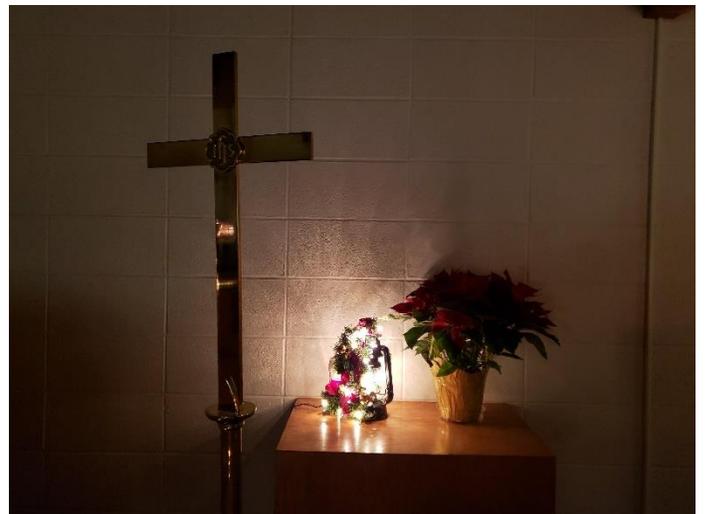
Jeff

Office Remains Closed

While the church office remains officially closed, Pastor Jayne has been at the church from the mid-morning until the mid-afternoon, usually Tuesday through Friday. The times may vary according to other ministry needs in the congregation. So, it's best to call her or email if you need to reach her or visit her at the church. You may reach Pastor by email (pastor@holyredeemer.church), text or cell phone: 320-492-6377. If you have Facebook, you may reach her by Messenger. Admin Assistant, Jeff Hand, can also be reached by email (secretary@holyredeemer.church), text or cell phone: 319-899-7688. If you need to stop by the church, please contact Jeff to make arrangements. He stops at church daily to process mail and handle the limited tasks that cannot be done from home.



Merry Christmas 2020





Future Events

January 2021

Note: Activities in our building continue to be suspended except with council permission.

Jan 1 (Fri)	New Year's Day 2021	Jan 14 (Thu)	7:00 pm Council Meeting (Zoom)
Jan 3 (Sun)	2 Christmas 9:00 am Worship (FB Live)	Jan 17 (Sun)	9:00 am Worship (FB Live) 10:00 am Budget Roundtable (Zoom)
Jan 5 (Tue)	Bible Study (via email)	Jan 19 (Tue)	Bible Study (via email)
Jan 6 (Wed)	1:00 pm Staff Meeting	Jan 20 (Wed)	Newsletter Deadline
Jan 7 (Thu)	6:30 pm Executive Mtg (Zoom) Committees (TBD - chairpersons)	Jan 21 (Thu)	Mission of Hope Meal
Jan 10 (Sun)	9:00 am Worship (FB Live) Food Bank Weekend 10:00 am Budget Roundtable (Zoom)	Jan 24 (Sun)	9:00 am Worship (FB Live) 4 th W/E offering – Souper Bowl of Caring 10:00 am Annual Meeting (Zoom)
Jan 11 (Mon)	Annual Meeting Packet Deadline	Jan 26 (Tue)	Bible Study (via email)
Jan 12 (Tue)	Bible Study (via email)	Jan 31 (Sun)	9:00 am Worship (FB Live) 5 th W/E offering – Chains Interrupted
Jan 13 (Wed)	11:00 am Pr & SM leader meeting		

February 2021

(All Events Tentative and Subject to Change)

Feb 2:	12:30 pm Card Players 3:00 pm Bible Study	Feb 14:	9:00 am Worship Food Bank Weekend
Feb 3:	1:00 pm Staff meeting	Feb 16:	12:30 pm Card Players 3:00 pm Bible Study
Feb 4:	9:30 am Women's Bible Study 6:30 pm Executive Meeting 7:00 pm Committee Meetings	Feb 18:	Mission of Hope Meal
Feb 7:	9:00 am Worship	Feb 19:	Newsletter Deadline
Feb 9:	3:00 pm Bible Study	Feb 21:	9:00 am Worship
Feb 10:	11:00 am Pr & SM leader meeting	Feb 23:	3:00 pm Bible Study
Feb 11:	9:30 am WiGS 7:00 pm Council Meetings	Feb 28:	9:00 am Worship 4 th W/E offering – Comm. Health Free Clinic



Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church
720 Edgewood Road NW
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52405

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<u>Inside this issue</u>	<u>Page</u>
❖ Council Corner	2
❖ Synod News	2
❖ Outreach.....	3
❖ Adult News.....	4
❖ Miscellaneous.....	5
❖ Merry Christmas.....	8
❖ Future Events	9



Church Staff

Pastor Jayne Thompson

Pastor
319-396-8547 ext 11
pastor@holyredeemer.church

Jeff Hand

Administrative Assistant
(319) 396-8547 ext 10
secretary@holyredeemer.church

Jacqueline Murphy

Director of Music Ministries
(319) 396-8547

Open Position

Custodian
(319) 396-8547

Church Office Hours

Monday – Friday
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Worship Services
Sunday, 9:00 a.m.
(Streaming on FB Live)



*If we live by the Spirit, let us also
be guided by the Spirit.*

Galatians 5:25 (NRSV)



Holy Redeemer
Lutheran Church

Join us as we grow to and for Christ!!!