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# Our History

The truth is the same whether speaking about a church, a business or even a relationship: most things drift toward complexity rather than simplicity. Therefore, aiming for simplicity first requires knowing our story. We need to regularly remember to honor the past, pay close attention to the present, and prayerfully plan for the future. I want to invite our church to not only to refocus and realign ourselves with God and his word, but I also want to invite you to the table to do some things... dream with me, imagine with me, pray with me, catch a vision for what a church filled with the Holy Spirit, walking in the light of the truth, passionate about Jesus would look like as we embody our vision of *faithful presence to God, self, and others*. Jesus established his church to be led by humble servant leaders but that doesn't mean that the leaders do all of the work alone! Far from it! Paul instructs the leaders to "equip the saints for the work of the ministry."<sup>1</sup> My prayer is that God would stir something within us, awaken us to where we need to grow, and call us even closer to himself.

## A PRAYER BEFORE PROCEEDING

*Father, we belong to you because you sought us and brought us forth. We long to make much of Jesus our Savior through the Holy Spirit here in Seattle. Our desire is to become the church You desire to see flourish in our city. Let our passion and commitment to you come through in how we dream, communicate, and serve one another. Inspire us as your people. Give us thoughts, ideas, and solutions that our church and city so desperately need. Make us missionaries. Give us the strength and boldness of the early Church. Give us the joy of Jesus and the contentment of Paul. May we find our greatest happiness in seeing You exalted, O Jesus. We pray this in your name, through the Holy Spirit to you God, our Abba, Father. Amen.*

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<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 4:13

As you know, Redemption Church is six years old and *now* is the perfect time to replant Redemption Church! However, before we do that, we should revisit the past. Knowing and honoring where we came from in the spirit of gratitude will help us reset us up for what's next. Back on July 21st of 2013 I had my first meeting with Drew Hensley and Ryan Kearns about the possibility of planting Redemption Church one day. We sat at Chuck's Hop Shop in Greenwood and more or less had a daydream kind of conversation. Questions of "What if?" and "What would it look like?" were on the rickety picnic table on the corner of 85th and 8th. The three of us were on staff at Mars Hill Church (I was transitioning out). Jana and I left Seattle and went to Reno to serve another church in the Mars Hill Network. We served there for two years but then found ourselves in the same kind of toxic church environment. We struggled immensely to say the least. Our faith and our marriage were completely exhausted. In April of 2016 Drew and Ryan reached out and encouraged us to move back to Seattle and join the earliest foundational work of assisting in planting Redemption. Jana and I prayed about it but we felt as though it was wise for us to completely step away from vocational ministry for over a year, submit to loads of counseling, heal, and then seek God's will over what's next. Drew and Ryan carried on in that first year of co-planting Redemption. It was in that time that Jana and I were healed and were reoriented toward each other, God, his word, and his calling on our lives.

In July of 2016, we moved back to Seattle to serve Redemption. Two months later, Ryan Kearns and his family relocated to Texas. Drew and I then embarked on a three year journey together co-leading Redemption. During my first six months serving as a deacon, we added Ben Lacey as our second elder in the church. Then, over the next two years, we brought on both Mike Behnke and Greg Bekken to serve as elders as well. Ben, Mike, and Greg have continued to pour countless hours into our church behind the scenes and if it weren't for them, I'm not so sure that we'd actually be in the healthy place that we are today. I love you men. Thank you and your precious wives for all of your hard work, personal sacrifice, and faithful love for our members. Additionally we added two teams made up of members of Redemption – Personnel and Finance. These teams are comprised of men and women who weigh in at key moments throughout the year offering helpful insight into the infrastructure of Redemption.

Over those first 4 years there was an incredible amount of pastoral care for many of those who were so deeply wounded by what happened with the closing of Mars Hill Church. Amongst other things

going on in the church, the primary emphasis was given to being a safe place where people can heal at a realistic pace. Having personally planted a gospel-centered church in Georgia and working closely with church planters all over the world through Acts 29 for a decade, I knew that what I was getting into here was anything but conventional. Redemption was not a traditional church plant at all. There was a large core group, enough money to sustain two full-time pastors, and even a location to meet in from day one. Most church plants don't have any of those things in place right out of the gate. Such was what we needed and God provided. At the same time, most church plants begin with a tremendous emphasis on mission and evangelism and reaching unbelievers in the community. In fact, church planting is the most effective form of evangelism here in the United States. From the outset, Redemption was a hospital for many wounded believers. The men and women who remained present to care for the sheep have played such an invaluable role. Yet, here at Redemption, we didn't have much in the way of evangelism going on because so many were still scrambling with questions like "Am I even a Christian?" or feelings of deep suspicion over church leadership. The first six years Redemption has been a hospital of sorts for people to heal, recover, refocus, grieve, and process all that has come our way both through the closing of Mars Hill and the rise of popular deconstructionism. As time has gone on, we have witnessed God healing and restoring so many people's faith in Jesus and his Church! In August of 2019, we were able to bring Daniel Folgado on the team to become our Director of Worship. He quickly fit right in, started developing musicians and adding loads of new music to our worship catalog. He was and is an invaluable part of our team!

This brings us to November 2019. It was then that Drew and Laura stepped down and moved back to South Carolina to be near family. I know what many are thinking at this point. "Wait. That's a lot of staff turnover. Is that normal?" And the answer is YES. This happens in almost every church plant. Those that you think will be there for the long haul move on to other places and those that you never thought would stick around end up being those that stay their whole lives. I told our elders that I felt inclined not to rehire and backfill his position but to simply let the dust settle, go through the first quarter of 2020, assess our *real* needs, and then build out an entirely new position.

From November 5<sup>th</sup> through March 1<sup>st</sup> we saw an increase in attendance of nearly 40 adults plus children weekly. Suddenly, we were faced with looking to go to two services on Sunday mornings. Megan Folgado noticed how stretched I was becoming in all of my responsibilities and reached out, offering to join

the team and help me stay focused on pastoring our church well but bringing a strong administrative skill set to the team. So, we hired her. Literally, the next day... COVID. We were amongst the very first churches in the nation to close our doors due to the pandemic. I spoke with one of our elders, Ben Lacey, about the rumors of COVID. He encouraged me to close weekend services. I thought it seemed wise and so we did. We tightened up spending and sought to save money not knowing exactly how 2020 would go. Everything went online and our team (Daniel and Megan Folgado, Natalie Bolen, and Kelly Bone) worked hard to find new and creative ways to bring the church into your homes week by week given all the new complications and restrictions. If it weren't for the faithful volunteering of Cameron Morris, Brendan McDonnell, Brian Eichelberger, Michael Baxter, Matt Tolich, and Spencer Abbot, we wouldn't have been able to have our Digital Liturgies which includes everything that we would do on a typical Sunday morning in our building. Then more trauma...

Following the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmad Aubrey, and Breonna Taylor, we took many people in our church through *The Color of Compromise* by Jemar Tisby. This coincided with our eight week sermon series through *My Neighbor: Ethnicity, Justice, and the Image of God*. The year was fraught with challenges to say the least. Yet, to put our heads in the sand and "just preach the gospel" simply wasn't what God was calling us to. In order to "preach the gospel" it must come to bear on our own context; such is the work of contextualization and faithful missiology. As emotions were soaring, questions were being asked, some were protesting in the streets, some were rioting; our nation shook and God, in his mercy kept us grounded not in headlines but in his word. About seven months into the pandemic both Natalie (*Director of Women's Ministry and Care*) and Kelly (*Director of Redemption Kids Ministry*) stepped down in order to relocate to be near family. Not only were we already at the drawing board drafting up the job description for right next pastoral hire, we also now needed these staff positions filled as well. By grace, we did not panic or act impulsively. We as elders and staff felt called to simply lean into our vision of being faithfully present to our own congregation, continue to move slowly and strategically, stewarding time, resources, and the well-being of our people. We talked and prayed and talked and prayed over the next three hires.

In preparing for the next hires, we knew that credentials are important but more than that is a person's character. As we thought about strategic hires, we knew that we were going to need men and women to join our team in a complimentary fashion. Not only that, but our roles demand a high relational

capacity as well. In a church committed to *faithful presence*, leaders that lean into the vision are key. As we've prayed, God has graciously brought us the right people for team! First, we brought Buggy Castro on board to lead our Redemption Kids Ministry and she has done an absolutely marvelous job! After several interviews with people outside of our church, we were graced to make two more internal hires! We are so pleased to welcome Mark Dunford to serve as our *Pastor of Spiritual Formation and Operations* and Lisa Eichelberger to serve as our *Director of Women's Ministry and Care*! Making these internal hires is also strategic. After being apart for so long due to the pandemic, we thought that it would be most loving and wise to place as many familiar faces in leadership as possible. Reorientation requires certain kind of vitamins – normalcy, familiarity, and stability. These men and women provide just that for our church body As we reopen, our desire is that you feel a sense of “home” and “belonging.” This brings us to where we are now. As we are in the very beginning stages of reopening and following the CDC guidelines, we need to be positioning ourselves well to hit the ground running. This means that there are some things that need to be cut away and other things that need to be introduced to the renewed rhythms in the life of Redemption.

# What does it mean to replant as a church?

## A BRIEF CHECK-IN

When we think about replanting our church; I want you to first start with yourself and do a simple check-in. How are you right now? This year we've all been quite distracted, discouraged, and disoriented. Think for a moment about what disciplines used to be part of your life that slipped to the wayside. Disciplines surrounding prayer, worship, fasting, reading Scripture, and connecting with other believers. Where have you grown *distracted* and neglected self-discipline?<sup>2</sup>

Next think about your own mental and emotional state. For many, we've had our serious bouts with *discouragement*. The pandemic, the media, and state of our world has been so very saddening. Not only that, but there have been moments where others who claim to follow Christ have done all but represent him well. Scripture tells us that David used to "encourage himself in the Lord."<sup>3</sup> This means that David found his strength in the story and presence of God. He was not minimizing his troubles or ignoring the world with a trite "let go and let God" kind of cliché. Instead, he recalled God's faithfulness, leaned into his presence, and found strength and encouragement there. What it would like for you to begin *encouraging* yourself in the Lord daily?

Lastly, consider just how disoriented you may have become over the last year. Literally everything that was "normal" was tossed up into the air. Being *disoriented* is far from pleasant and it can lead to stress in every area of life. Were have you "lost your footing"? In what ways have you been/are you currently disoriented? Take a few moments and get honest. Write down what you discover; pray, and even reach out to a pastor in the church or another member ask someone to walk with you on your journey towards reorientation. Begin there; with yourself.

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<sup>2</sup> "The classical writers used to relate self-discipline to liberty. The person who was most free was the one who had the most control over himself... Self-discipline is the beginning of wisdom, but not its end. When we have accomplished the initial task of self-discipline, we will, if we are sane, hardly recall it, for it will have freed us to see so much else.", James V. Schall, *On the Unseriousness of Human Affairs: Teaching, Writing, Playing, Believing, Lecturing, Philosophizing, Singing, Dancing*, pp.109-110. Part of remaining faithfully present to self has to do with self-discipline and self-denial.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Samuel 30:6



## WHY IS REDEMPTION CHURCH HERE?

As we think about replanting our church, we must ask ourselves the very basic question, “What is the church actually *for*?” “Of all institutions, why does God value the church so very much?” “Why is *our* church here?” C.S. Lewis said,

“It is easy to think that the Church has a lot of different objects — education, building, missions holding services. Just as it is easy to think the State has a lot of different objects — military, political, economic, and what not. But in a way things are much simpler than that. The State exists simply to promote and protect the ordinary happiness of human beings in this life. A husband and wife chatting over a fire, a couple of friends having a game of darts in a pub. A man reading a book in his own room, or digging in his own garden—that is what the State is there for. And unless they are helping to increase and prolong and protect such moments, all the laws, parliaments, armies, courts, police, economics, etc., are simply a waste of time. In the same way the Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time. God became Man for no other purpose. It is even doubtful, you know, whether the whole universe was created for any other purpose.”<sup>4</sup>

The *Church* is the people of God who belong to him through the death and resurrection of Christ. We are those filled with the Holy Spirit, sent out to be the salt of the earth and light of the world! We are the redeemed and our purpose is to serve one another, magnify Jesus, promote human flourishing in the world, and call others to faith and repentance. God values the Church because she is the bride of Christ. Our church is here because God willed us to exist as Redemption. By grace, we have qualified leadership, proclaim the Scriptures, and administer the sacraments. We are here *responding* to God and the gospel and offering our lives in faithful presence to him. Our church is here because God has called us to make disciples (Matt. 28:19) and this includes both growing in grace and knowledge as well as to share the gospel with our neighbors. We are called to take the gospel message into our city through our relationships with our neighbors and coworkers. That’s why we’re here! We want to know Jesus and make him known.

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<sup>4</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 199. Or as Missiologist, Darrel Guder states, “The church as fundamentally and comprehensively defined by its calling and sending, its purpose to serve God’s healing purposes for all the world as God’s witnessing people to all the world.” See Darrell Guder, “Walking Worthily: Missional Leadership after Christendom,” *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 28, no. 3 (2007), 252.

As we think about replanting Redemption, we need to do this now while we are still in our current state of restrictions instead of simply waiting until later. Let's be the prepared church! The anticipatory church! The expectant church! One simple way to begin this is simply to participate on Sundays in worship. Many are participating on Sundays in our Digital Liturgies at 10:00 AM. At the same time, many are tuning in later in the week and some not at all. I want to call us back to making Sunday worship a real *priority* for those who are waning or have wandered in this way. The writer of Hebrews admonishes us to "not neglect the gathering of the saints" (Heb. 10:25). Certainly online is far from ideal, but it is nonetheless what our "gathering" looks like for the time being. I want to encourage you to get up on Sunday, prepare your mind and heart to worship, and participate on Sunday mornings in worship. Sing! Pray! Read! Participate! Reach out to your friends and connect at some point during the day on Sundays to check in on others. Think of one person you could text a link to an invite them to join us online or join in person on Sunday mornings. Don't put it off. Go for it!

## Faithful Presence: A Response

Redemption Church is striving to remain faithfully present in our relationship with God, Self, and Others. Our *vision* is birthed out of a *response* to God and the gospel. We are not attempting to live moral lives in an attempt to earn salvation. Far from it! We are the recipients of the *grace* of God are simply responding to that reality by the work of Holy Spirit. Sociologist James Davison Hunter writes,

“The very character of God and the heart of his Word is that God is fully and faithfully present to us. On the face of it, faithful presence suggests proximity, but it is much more than this. His faithful presence is an expression of commitment marked by . . . *Pursuit, identification, the offer of life through sacrificial love* — this is what God’s faithful presence means. It is a quality of commitment that is active, not passive; intentional, not accidental; covenantal, not contractual. In the life of Christ we see how it entailed his complete attention. It is wholehearted, not half-hearted; focused and purposeful, nothing desultory about it. His very name, Immanuel, signifies all of this — “God with us” — in our presence (Matt. 1:23).<sup>5</sup>

As we replant Redemption, we are going to consistently put an emphasis on our vision and this means that we are going to have to repeatedly emphasize the value, beauty and glory found in the slow, tedious, and often mundane work of Spiritual Formation. Paul stated that he labored “to present everyone *mature* in Christ” (Col. 1:28). Maturity involves paying attention to your whole life—your mental, emotional, psychological, spiritual, and relational way of being in the church and world. This is no small thing! Brennan Manning said, “For me the most radical demand of Christian faith lies in summoning the courage to say yes to the present risenness of Jesus Christ.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World*, p.241, 43.

<sup>6</sup> Brennan Manning, *Abba’s Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging*, 99.

# Faithful Presence to God

*“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.” — John 15:4*

“Time! There’s never enough time!” As a pastor, I hear this quite often. As we strive to remain faithfully present to God in a city as busy, transient, and distracted as Seattle; our *time* is of incredible value. “Be attentive to time and the way you spend it. Nothing is more precious. This is evident when you recall that in one tiny moment heaven may be gained or lost. God, the master of time, never gives the future. He gives only the present, moment by moment.”<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the biggest clue on how to remain present comes from where we might least expect – children! Swiss theologian, Hans Urs Von Balthasar encourages us to take note of how *children* keep time.

“Pressured man on the run is always postponing his encounter with God to a ‘free moment’ or a ‘time of prayer’ that must constantly be rescheduled, a time that he must laboriously wrest from his overburdened workday. A child that knows God can find him at every moment because every moment opens up for him and shows him the very ground of time: as it if reposed on eternity itself. And this eternity, without undergoing change, walks hand in hand for the child with transitory time. God defines himself as ‘I am who I am’, which also means: My being is such that I shall always be present in every moment of becoming.”<sup>8</sup>

Remaining present to God primarily has more to do with remembering that God is present us through the Holy Spirit. It is from this space that we then begin the *active disciples of Bible Study, corporate worship, Scripture memorization, fasting, praying, etc.*

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<sup>7</sup> Anonymous, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, cited in Bernard McGinn, *Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*, p. 264.

<sup>8</sup> Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Unless You Become Like This Child*, pp. 54-55.

# Faithful Presence to Self

*“Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.”* — Proverbs 4:23

We are not only to remain present to God but also to our own selves. John Calvin said “Our wisdom, if it is to be thought genuine, consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves.”<sup>9</sup> Solomon said “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life” (Prov. 4:23). He understood that the unattended life is one that soon finds itself in distress. The word “guard” is best translated as “keep” as in Adam and Eve were intended to “*keep* the Garden of Eden” The point being that they were to maintain it and see it continue to flourish and bloom in beauty. Our souls are in need of that *kind* of diligent, focused, care. We are to be mindful of our temptations, our longings, our pasts, and what is going on within us so that we might be on guard against the enemy and his schemes and so that we might walk wisely in this day and age. Pete Scazzero writes that “True spirituality frees us to live joyfully in the present. It requires, however, going back in order to go forward. This takes us to the very heart of spirituality and discipleship in the family of God—breaking free from the destructive sinful patterns of our past to live the life of love God intends.”<sup>10</sup>

Faithful Presence to your own self takes real time, intentionality, and discipline. Those words can strike us as overwhelming but the reward is so worth it! As we are present to our own selves, we become whole in Christ because we can see where he has worked, is working, and pray for his continued witness in our lives. Again, this will take time.

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<sup>9</sup> This is the opening line of *The Institutes*. See John Calvin, *The Institutes of Christian Religion*, (eds. Tony Lane and Hilary Osborne, p. 21.

<sup>10</sup> Pete Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: It's Impossible to be Spiritually Mature, While Remaining Emotionally Immature*, 71.

## Faithful Presence to Others

Having researched the ins and outs of the American Dream, author Courtney Martin said in an interview,

“Rather than having a symbol—the white picket fence, the fancy car, the big house—the next generation needs to measure their quality of life on symbiosis. How is the health of my relationships? How intentional am I able to be with my time and presence? Do I feel like I belong somewhere beautiful? These are the new questions we can ask ourselves about a life well-lived.”<sup>11</sup>

We are all feeling the weight of the truth of her words. God diagnosed this problem long before the American Dream was even dreamt up and he provided the solution in the gospel and in giving us not only salvation but he has given us to each other. As we journey through life following Jesus, we recognize that we are undoubtedly going to endure hardships and suffer and the temptation will be to “steel ourselves off from reality” and not share our burdens with one another. Yet, that is to our own detriment.

“The trouble with steeling yourself against the harshness of reality is that the same steel that secures your life against being destroyed secures your life also against being opened up and transformed but the holy power that life itself comes from. You can survive on your own. You can grow strong on your own. You can even prevail on your own. But you cannot become human on your own. Surely that is why, in Jesus’s sad joke, the rich man has as hard a time getting into Paradise as the camel through the needle’s eye because with his credit card in his pocket, the rich man is so effective at getting for himself everything he needs that he does not see that what he needs more than anything else in the world can be had only as a gift. He does not see that the one thing a clenched fist cannot do is accept even from *le bon Dieu*, himself, a helping hand.”<sup>12</sup>

Oh the difference it would make if we understood that each member of our church is a *gift* from God to one another!

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<sup>11</sup> Courtney Martin, Author of *The New Better Off: Reinventing the American Dream*, citylab.com, accessed March 16, 2021.

<sup>12</sup> Frederick Buechner, *A Crazy, Holy, Grace: The Healing Power of Pain and Memory*, pp. 41-42.

# Faithful Presence | Inside the Church<sup>13</sup>

“Encourage one another day after day as long as it is still called ‘today’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” — Hebrews 3:12-13

Pastor Eugene Peterson wrote, “Our membership in the church is a corollary of our faith in Christ. We can no more be a Christian and have nothing to do with the church than we can be a person and not be in a family.... It is part of the fabric of redemption.”<sup>14</sup> The writers of the New Testament place a *tremendous* emphasis on being faithfully present to one another in the church.

- “Be *devoted* to one another in brotherly love...” (Romans 12:10)
- “...have *equal concern* for each other.” (I Corinthians 12:25)
- “...*serve* one another in love.” (Galatians 5:13)
- “*Carry* each other’s burdens...” (Galatians 6:2)
- “*Bear* with each other...” (Colossians 3:13)
- “*Teach*...[one another]” (Colossians 3:16)
- “*Confess* your sins to each other...” (James 5:16)
- “...*spur* one another on toward love and good deeds.” (Hebrews 10:24)
- “...*meet together*... *encouraging* one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” (Hebrews 10:25)

As we replant Redemption, we need recover the discipline of coming together with real *intentionality*.<sup>15</sup> This means we don’t merely show up to worship services, Small Groups, or serving events. We arrive with a purpose: *to bless and build the church!* One way that we are going to see our relationships grow is to practice the often overlooked skill of *listening*. Our city moves so quickly and each day we have countless exchanges through text and email. We are on information overload from sun up to sundown. Yet, in all the back and forth communication; we often don’t feel heard. How can we as members cultivate a community of faithful presence? Through listening. “Listening is the way we are present to time, to self, to another, to God. Listening is not something you can do in retrospect—it is not remembering; listening is the way we attend to here and now in the fullness of time.”<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> “As emotionally mature Christian adults, we recognize that loving well is the essence of true spirituality. This requires that we experience connection with God, with ourselves, and with other people. God invites us to practice his presence in our daily lives. At the same time, he invites us to “practice the presence of people,” within an awareness of his presence, in our daily relationships.” See Pete Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, p.175

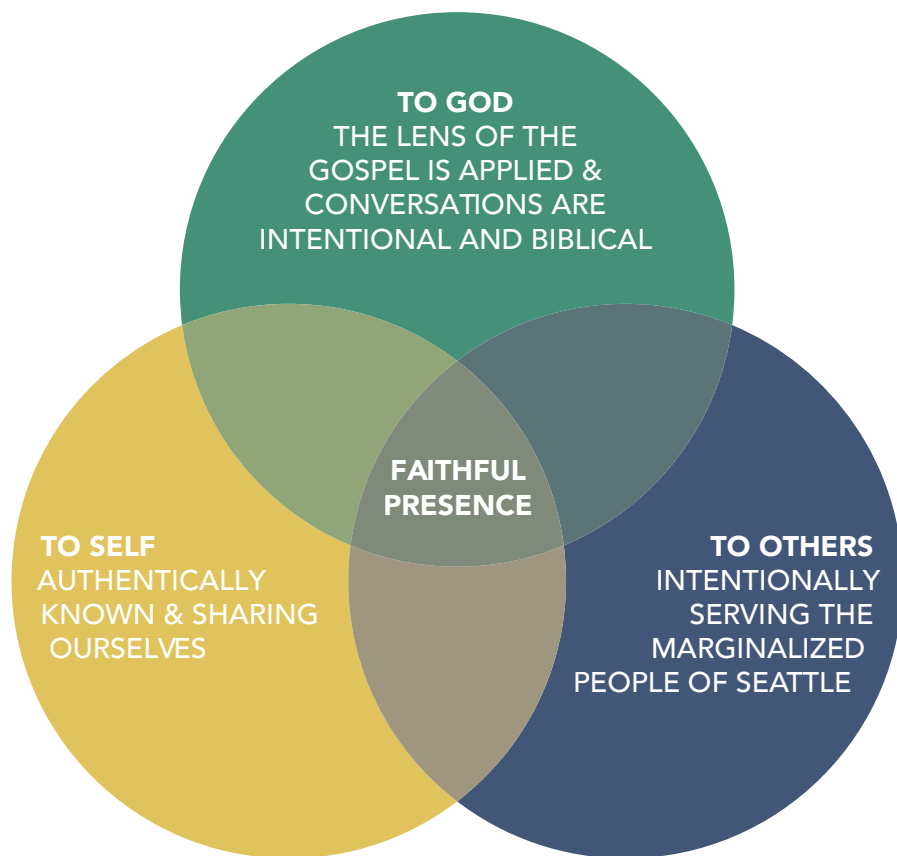
<sup>14</sup> Eugene Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, 175.

<sup>15</sup> Courtney Martin, Author of *The New Better Off*, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-09-13/do-we-need-to-redefine-better-off>, Sept. 13, 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Keith Anderson, *Reading Your Life’s Story: An Invitation to Spiritual Mentoring*, p. 130. “When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares.” Henri Nouwen, *Out of Solitude: Three Meditations on the Christian Life*, p. 38.

# Small Groups

Key to the process of replanting Redemption Church is thinking intentionally about the output of each ministry housed under our roof. We've repeatedly emphasized our vision; *"we are a community striving to be faithfully present to God, self and others."* To that end, we are remaining focused on our convictions while simultaneously expanding the definition of what a Small Group is at Redemption. In other words, our vision becomes the lens by which we evaluate the effectiveness of a group.



In creation, we observe that God is creative, ordered, and rhythmical. All of creation fitting together perfectly. Reading the opening pages of Genesis we notice intentional patterns that are designed to teach us something about life. We see God creating morning and evening, land and sea, birds and fish, male and female. This reflects the creative beauty of God! As his image bearers, we learn that an *ordered life* is the result of remaining present to God and therefore establishing rhythms and patterns



for growth, rest, play, and serving others. Our Small Groups will gather at established times, in different settings, around different topics and activities all aimed toward remaining faithfully present to God, self, and others. Some examples of the kinds of activities are:

- sermon based study groups
- book study groups
- jogging groups
- hiking groups
- cycling groups
- walking the lake
- podcast groups
- entrepreneur groups
- cooking or dinner groups
- sewing/knitting groups
- new moms/new dads groups
- prayer groups
- parenting groups

## **FAITHFUL PRESENCE IN SMALL GROUPS — TO GOD**

Regardless of the catalyst for bringing the group together (cooking, walking, book study, etc.), as Christians, we are striving to be present to God. Our groups should be focused on reminding members of our identity in Him and the practical application of the Gospel in our lives. In other words, the Gospel message and the Holy Spirit's guidance shapes how we view and live our lives. There are lots of groups that walk together in Seattle around all kinds of causes. We walk with Jesus and lean into His presence in community with one another.

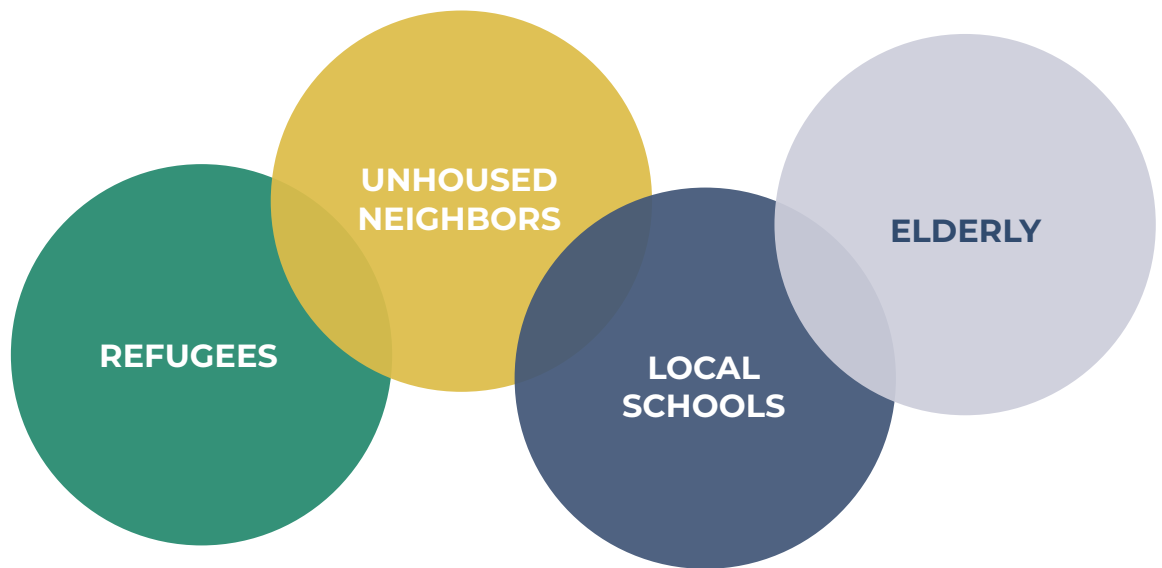
## **FAITHFUL PRESENCE IN SMALL GROUPS — TO SELF**

Our groups should be marked by honesty, authenticity and vulnerability. When we commit to a Small Group, we're committed to being known and sharing our true selves. We're collectively processing our lives together, celebrating together, grieving together; living *life* together. This also means that we aren't simply meeting to participate in an activity. We can of course do that, but we're intentionally creating space to share and be known.

## FAITHFUL PRESENCE IN SMALL GROUPS — TO OTHERS

We love our city. More importantly, Jesus loves our city! God’s people were always intended to *bless* those around them — the nations, the cities, and our neighbors. Co-laboring together is also a way to be known. Serving others gives us the opportunity to love our city in practical, meaningful ways and to do so with those in which we find ourselves in community.

Service opportunities are by no means limited to these categories, but the Redemption is actively organizing and focusing on serving what are traditionally marginalized communities: our unhoused neighbors, refugees, local title one schools, and the elderly. During each group window, we’d ask that groups participate with one of the available projects. Remember, “it is more blessed to give than to receive.” God’s Spirit is uniquely present to those who are giving their time to serving others. Your joy will increase as you seek to bless those in need.



## GROUP WINDOWS

*Intentionality* is a major focus on our change to Small Groups. We want to emphasize consistency and commitment — both fundamental elements of *faithful presence*. To that end, we’ve broken our year up into three “windows.” The windows are designed to give our groups time to lean into the natural rhythms of growth and rest, service and play; as we pause for several weeks, we’re creating margin in order to have people over for dinner, engage our neighbors or find additional areas to serve.

We’ve also added “intentional pauses” to the schedule. As we establish rhythms with our groups, pausing for several weeks ensures that there is margin available to have people over for dinner, engage our neighbors or find additional areas to serve.

### SUMMER WINDOW 2021

(SIX WEEKS)

WEEK OF JUNE 20<sup>TH</sup> — WEEK OF JULY 25<sup>TH</sup>

### INTENTIONAL PAUSE

### FALL WINDOW 2021

(THIRTEEN WEEKS)

WEEK OF SEPT 12<sup>TH</sup> — WEEK OF DEC 5<sup>TH</sup>

### INTENTIONAL PAUSE

### SPRING WINDOW 2022

(THIRTEEN WEEKS)

WEEK OF FEB 6<sup>TH</sup> — WEEK OF MAY 1<sup>ST</sup>

## CASE STUDY — SMALL BUSINESS ENTREPRENEUR GROUP

We want you to get an idea of how these groups might organize and operate to be a group that is faithfully present to itself, God and others. In this case, let's assume we have 6 people in our church who operate businesses — large or small.

### WEEK ONE

*90 minutes*

- Gather at a coffee shop before work.
- Introduce yourselves and share work & faith background.
- Determine discussion subjects for the remaining weeks.

### WEEK TWO

*90 minutes*

- Gather at a coffee shop before work.
- Discussion around compensation for employees in an expensive city.
- Discuss how the Gospel and Scripture might inform that conversation.

### WEEK THREE

*120 minutes*

- Gather for Happy Hour after work.
- Share how life (work & personal) is going and pray for one another.

### WEEK FOUR

*90 minutes*

- Gather at a coffee shop before work.
- Discussion around managing work/life balance.
- Discuss how the Gospel and Scripture might inform that conversation.

### SERVICE PROJECT

- Participate in the World Relief gardening project

### WEEK FIVE

*90 minutes*

- Gather at a coffee shop before work.
- Discussion around securing financing and planning for strategic expansion
- Discuss how the Gospel and Scripture might inform that conversation.

### WEEK SIX

*120 minutes*

- Gather for Happy Hour after work.
- Share how life (work & personal) is going and pray for one another.

As you can see, the purpose is gathering together around a common interest, but to do so with the intention of more than merely “talking shop.” We want to grow deeply in our relationships with God and one another while remembering to love and serve those in need around us in our city.

## Faithful Presence to Others | Redemption Kids

Our Redemption Kids Ministry couldn't be more blessed to have Buggy Castro leading! Buggy has been a member of Redemption for four years. She and her husband Kirk have served us faithfully throughout and to have her leading in Redemption Kids is an honor. Since jumping onto the team, she's brought *several* new creative ideas to love our kids during our time of staying at home. She also has a passion for seeing our kids grow as followers of Jesus as *servants* of the King! Part of implementing our vision of *faithful presence to others* involves discipling our kids in the area of serving others. Buggy recently said, "You know, kids feel more connected to the church when they're contributing to something bigger than themselves. I want them to know that serving others is a normal aspect of following Jesus for all of our lives."

Beyond discipling our kids, she knows firsthand how much our Sunday School teachers sacrifice in order to bless our children. Historically, we've asked our members who have children in Redemption Kids to volunteer once a month on Sunday morning rotation so as to provide opportunities to the other parents to worship at least 3/4 Sunday's a month.

One thing to pray for that as we reopen, we anticipate that it will likely go slowly as people become more and more comfortable in crowds. As our congregation grows, if we were to go to two services, this would create opportunities for families to serve one service and still go to worship at the other on Sunday mornings. **If you have questions, suggestions, thoughts, or ideas about Redemption Kids ministry, please reach out to [buggy@redemptionseattle.com](mailto:buggy@redemptionseattle.com)!**

## Faithful Presence to Others | Women's Ministry

Lisa Eichelberger is our new *Director of Women's Ministry and Care!* Since stepping into this role, she has brought so much light and insight to our staff and a refreshing vision as to how she is going about leading in this capacity. She is currently recruiting a team of women around her to help in facilitating caring well for each woman in Redemption Church. One passage that the Holy Spirit has impressed on her as she reflects on her vision for women's ministry come from Paul's letter to the Ephesian church.

“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

— Eph. 4:1-3

In reflecting on the vision of seeing our women thrive in *faithful presence to God, self, and others*, Lisa said, “I want to see our women growing both individually and collectively! God has called us not only to grow in our devotion to him but also commitment to one another. He wants to see us consistently building one another up, submitting to his word, and leaning into the Holy Spirit! All too often lies of fear and envy can keep us from being fully known and present to one another and so it is going to take real courage and honesty and gentleness to help us see these things, repent, and grow. It is also really important that we recognize that all women don't share the same dreams, goals, calling, or aspirations in life. Some get married and some don't. Some have children and some do not or cannot for various reasons. Some work outside of the home and some don't. This vision of this ministry is not a cookie cutter that aims to produce hundreds of women who are all exactly alike. God creates and values our diversity in ethnicity, age, and life stage and so we are going to honor that reality and include everyone.”

Lisa is so very excited to create spaces in which our women can connect and grow in our faith! **Ladies, if you or someone you know would like to get more information about women's ministry here at Redemption, please email [lisa@redemptionseattle.com](mailto:lisa@redemptionseattle.com).**

# Faithful Presence to Others | Leadership Development

Paul reminds the leaders of the church in Ephesus that they were to “equip the saints for the work of the ministry” (Eph. 4:13). Certainly this comes through the pulpit, book studies, and small group gatherings. We’ve had several book studies with various leaders over the years but it is time that *Leadership Development* gets some much-needed attention. In replanting Redemption, we’re going to take investing in our leaders seriously. From training days, to retreats, to follow ups, we want to see our leaders thriving! **Be thinking about who you could take under your wing and begin mentoring not only in the simple tasks around the church but think about how you might routinely invest in your teams. If you feel called to leadership in a particular ministry in our church, please reach out to [mark@redemptionseattle.com](mailto:mark@redemptionseattle.com)**

# Faithful Presence to Others | Pastoral Care

Henri Nouwen said,

“I am deeply convinced that the Christian leader of the future is called to be completely irrelevant and to stand in this world with nothing to offer but his or her own vulnerable self. That is the way Jesus came to reveal God’s love. The great message that we have to carry, as ministers of God’s Word and followers of Jesus, is that God loves us not because of what we do or accomplish, but because God has created and redeemed us in love and has chosen us to proclaim that love as the true source of all human life.”<sup>17</sup>

For three years, our elders were able to keep up with checking in regularly with our people. On average, every member of Redemption Church had at least one touch point with a pastor every 4-6 weeks. This was when we had two pastors on staff and three lay elders. Now that we’ve hired Mark Dunford to serve as our Pastor of Spiritual Formation and Operations, our pastoral care is going to be able to increase again and for that we are so very thankful! In commenting on the importance of pastoral care in at Redemption, Mark said, “As your pastors, we take seriously the responsibility of caring for the church. Christ purchased us with His blood. Could there be anything more important than His people? As pastors, we’re called to mimic what He did as a shepherd: to know, to love, to teach, to encourage and to disciple His church in the truth of the Gospel. Each of these elements are essential to all that we do! Foundational to all of it is knowing you and being known. There isn’t a template that cares for everyone in the church. Love is tailored, intentional and it’s essential to being part of Christ’s body.” As we replant Redemption, our elders are committed to regularly touching base with the members in order to best serve you, pray for you, care for you, and by God’s grace, lead you in a closer walk with Jesus. Our request of the members of Redemption would be that you wouldn’t feel as though you were an inconvenience nor the pressure to go it alone in your faith. Please reach out to us and let us know how we can best serve you.

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<sup>17</sup> Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership*, pp. 28-30.



# Faithful Presence on Sunday Mornings | Some Questions

As we replant and reopen, we all should be asking:

- How Will Sunday Mornings Feel?
- What Should I Expect?
- What Should My Posture Be as I come to worship?
- What Kind of Culture Do We Want to Create?

# Faithful Presence to God | Sunday Mornings: All Team Huddle

We're going to introduce our Sunday morning *All Team Huddle!* There are several faithful volunteers that serve week by week on a few different teams in order to make Sunday morning worship run smoothly. Our Hospitality Team (formerly called the "Engagement Team") arrives early to brew the coffee, set out the donuts, and put up signage around the lake and inside our church. Those involved in leading worship arrive not long after that. Then our Redemption Kids volunteers show up to set up their classrooms and prepare for all the children to show up for Sunday School. Our Prayer Team then arrives and goes upstairs to the Quiet Room (formerly known as the "Cry Room") to pray through the liturgy and for everyone on their way into worship. All of these teams are invaluable. However, we've consistently found that our Redemption Kids volunteers can grow weary along the way. It truly is a labor of love to show up, set up your room, pour yourself out, and then head home sometimes feeling like you didn't get to go to church. We're going to change that! Instead of having siloed teams that show up at different times to serve, we're going to have everyone arrive at the same time, have breakfast (burritos!) downstairs together and connect for a few minutes. From there we will have someone lead us in a couple of songs in worship, a brief devotional will be led by one of the staff or elders, and then we will take communion and pray together. Then we'll break and jump into the day. This simple change is one of those things that will help create a serving culture into which volunteers are known, seen, and invested. **If you're not personally involved in one of these ministries, please connect with** [megan@redemptionseattle.com](mailto:megan@redemptionseattle.com)

# Faithful Presence to God | Sunday Mornings: Worship

In August of 2019, Daniel Folgado joined the team as our Director of Worship and has done a phenomenal job leading us in person and online! His unique gifting enabled us to pivot online and worship throughout the pandemic. Most importantly, Daniel's natural approach to leading worship falls completely in line with our vision of remaining faithfully present to God, self, and others. In speaking with Daniel about replanting Redemption and what he envisions for us as a vibrant community engaged in worshipping God he said, "I would love to see our community continuing to grow toward a more wholistic view of worship. One that sees worship as all the moments of our life and not just what we do with our one hour together on a Sunday. I think for many of us, myself included, we've often relied solely on our theology to carry us through our days, but the worship of Yahweh is a much more beautiful and expansive view of life. It's a way in which we move throughout our days that keep our gaze fixed on Christ. And in the many moments that we fail, we're reminded again and again to come back and to turn our eyes. As we continue to turn, we find that everything we need we already have. Our worship and witness keep us striving to be faithfully present to God because he's always been faithfully present to us."

## **PUNCTUALITY**

Though it may not seem like a big deal to some, it matters. If we tell one another and our city that we begin at 10:00AM then that is when we will begin; not 10:05. Again, this is changing the culture of the church. It is a minor change that communicates we're serious about our God and honoring people's time.

## **EXPECTANCY**

We need to become the expectant people of God! God has assured us that he inhabits the praises of his people (Psalm 22:3). Jesus is present with us as we gather in his name (Matt. 18:20). Remember, God reached you, regenerated you, made you new in Christ! And he's not done working on you, in you, and through you! Come expectant knowing that God keeps his promises and is going to speak to you week by week. This means that you make getting to bed on Saturday evening on time a priority. This means that you rise a few minutes early on Sunday morning to prepare your heart to worship. This means that you show up ready to meet with God, his word, and his people. Come expectant!

## **PARTICIPATE**

We all have different ways in which we respond to God in worship. Some are more expressive and some are far more contemplative. I want to challenge our church especially in becoming more expressive. We're instructed in the Scriptures to sing (Psalm 95:1), praise (Psalm 148:5), clap (Psalm 47:1), shout (Psalm 100:1), bow (Psalm 138:2), be still (Psalm 46:10), and a host of other things. Remember God delivered his people out of bondage "so that they may worship me" (Ex. 7:16). We are commanded by God to respond in our *freedom* to worship!

## **WELCOMING NEWCOMERS**

We're a very hospitable people; at the same time, we all get into our routines and drift toward comfortability and so we naturally pay more attention to our friends and people we recognize over those who may be new in our midst. Start praying now and thinking about being even more hospitable. Hospitality is the heat that melts the Seattle Freeze.

## **SENDING**

Our city is an extremely transient city. Our church has seen incredible amounts of turnover due to people's work taking them other places or relocating to be near family in some other place. We are going to be the church that as we practice faithful presence, we're going to also acknowledge that some are here only for a season and will then go somewhere else. Because we believe that God ordains the times and places in which people will live (Acts 17), we are going to be intentional about pouring into people who are here even for a season, invest in them, disciple them, and then intentionally and prayerfully send them out when they move. We will help them find a new church family to worship with so that they might take the gospel that they grew to love here and take it there. Paul would've found himself in a city like ours for this very reason.

# Faithful Presence | Outside the Church

*“This man receives sinners and eats with them.”* — Luke 15:2

As we navigate reopening, there are plenty of changes for us on the horizon that we can anticipate and surely there are some bridges that we'll have to cross when we get there. Over the last five years it is very clear that the people who call Redemption “home” truly do love one another. We have a very generous church full of people who are willing to give financially, relationally, and spiritually to one another. In so many ways we have functioned as a “hospital” to help so many recover from church fallout, to wrestling with deconstruction. This kind of church culture is a wonderful thing! We want to always serve as a hospital to those who need a place to heal and recover from whatever may have come their way. Such is the way of Jesus. At the same time we desire to strengthen a deep, *missional* conviction over the fact that God has people “in this city” (Acts 18:10) and has sent us into the world. Jesus said, “as the Father sent me, so I send you” (John 20:21). This means that every follower of Jesus is to see him/herself as one who is *sent*. We are to always be ready and willing to turn outward and engage our unbelieving friends, family, and coworkers with the gospel. Yes to both! *Hospital* and *hospitality*!

# Faithful Presence to Others | Evangelism

We live in what sociologists call the “None Zone.” For those who don’t know what this is—the None Zone describes our region’s religious affiliation – *none*.

Approximately 1/3 of Washington has no religious affiliation whatsoever. We can only assume that the number climbs higher in our city. Patricia O’Connell Killen writes,

“...the ‘secular but spiritual,’ constitutes most of the region’s (PNW) population. It includes two groups, both outs of conventional religious institutions. The first is those individuals who identify with a religious tradition but do not belong to one of its congregations. The second is the “Nones” proper, those who in response to the question “What is your religious tradition, if any?” answer “None.” Neither group is without religion. Even among the “Nones” only a small minority identify as atheist or agnostic. In fact, the vast majority of “Nones” claim beliefs and attitudes more like than unlike those persons inside churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques...It is clear that their identification with a religious heritage is sufficiently deep and meaningful that when asked their religious tradition, if any, they respond with the name of a recognized religious community. That identification may be a residue of family history or ethnic heritage, both of which the region quickly leaches out of many. It maybe a lingering element in a much larger process of disaffiliation in which the region leads the nation. IN this process post-modern global trends in individual motivation and social organization coalesce with the regions religious fluidity and with internal tensions in religious communities to erode individuals’ connections to religious institutions....The ‘Nones’ make up a slightly smaller segment of the unchurched. Not only have they moved beyond religious institutions, they have moved beyond identifying themselves in any way with a religious tradition. They may be one step beyond those who identify with a tradition but do not belong to one of its institutions. They may be fully engaged in a larger process of religious disaffiliation and de-identification. They also may be exemplars of a developing mode of religiousness.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Patricia O’Connell Killen, ‘Introduction: Patterns of the Past, Prospects for the Future: Religion in the None Zone’ in Religion and Public Life in the Pacific Northwest: The None Zone, ed by Patricia O’Connell Killen and Mark Silk, pp. 17-18, (2004).

As you can see, not only are we challenged with being in the None Zone, we are also home to a large “secular-but-spiritual” population. Douglas Todd writes,

“Cascadia’s large secular—but-spiritual cohort breaks down into at least three worldviews, each with its own approaches to nature. The first group engages with New Age spiritualities, emphasizing discovering one’s true self and sacred nature through... popular books.... Another group is apocalyptic. It includes hard-core anti-government white supremacists and survivalists. Like some hardcore environmentalists in Cascadia, survivalists have a sense of apocalypse: the fear that soon all of the region’s wilderness and beauty will be destroyed by unbridled capitalism and corrupt governments... The third major secular-but-spiritual group, according to Shibley is made up of those who intentionally follow nature religion.”<sup>19</sup>

Some may look at this and grow discouraged over the task ahead. But Jesus isn’t discouraged! Not in the slightest! When Jesus looked at the city he said things like “Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see the fields are white for harvest” (John 4:35). Each week, the gospel is presented clearly from our pulpit, always with sensitivity towards our unbelieving friends that join us in worship. Yet, the pulpit is not the only place in the church where the gospel is to be proclaimed! Part of remaining faithfully present to those outside of the church has to do with our stewardship of the gospel message. As we replant, God is calling us to be both bold and gentle in sharing the good news. Brennan Manning said,

“The Ministry of evangelization is an extraordinary opportunity of showing gratitude to Jesus by passing on His gospel of grace to others. However, the ‘conversion by concussion’ method with one sledgehammer blow of the Bible after another betrays a basic disrespect for the dignity of the other and is utterly alien to the gospel imperative to bear witness. To evangelize a person is to say to him or her: you, too, are loved by God in the Lord Jesus. And not only to say it but to really think it and relate it to the man or woman so they can sense it. This is what it means to announce the Good News. But that becomes possible only by offering the person your friendship; a friendship that is real, unselfish, without condescension, full of confidence, and profound esteem.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Douglas Todd, ‘Introduction’ in *Cascadia: The Elusive Utopia Exploring the Spirit of the Pacific Northwest*, 21.

<sup>20</sup> Brennan Manning, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, 120-21. Brennan offers a healthy challenge to all of us as he writes of the amount of time Jesus was willing to invest with all of the notorious sinners. He says, “Jesus spent a disproportionate amount of time with people described in the Gospels as the poor, the blind, the lame, the lepers, the hungry, sinners, prostitutes, tax collectors, the persecuted, the downtrodden, the captives, those possessed by unclean spirits, all who labor and have heavy burdens, the rabble who know nothing of the law, the crowds, the little ones, the least, the last, and the lost sheep of the house of Israel. In short, Jesus hung out with ragamuffins.” Also in *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, 51.

This is the kind of heart God longs to create and express through us here at Redemption! A people who “think it” and “relate it” to others in such a way that they can sense the truth of the love of God in the Lord Jesus. Who among our members is passionate about sharing the gospel of Jesus? **Can you help me in getting some classes (evangelism, mission, apologetics, etc.) as well prayer groups going in this direction? Contact [megan@redemptionseattle.com](mailto:megan@redemptionseattle.com)**



## Faithful Presence to Others | Mercy Ministry

Commenting on the Good Samaritan passage, Pastor Timothy Keller writes,

“This compassion was full-bodied, leading him to meet a variety of needs. This compassion provided friendship and advocacy, emergency medical treatment, transportation, a hefty financial subsidy, and even a follow up visit.”<sup>21</sup>

As said above, we are very generous church from outreaches to Mary’s Place, Aurora Commons, Angel Tree, World Relief, school drives, and we’ve engaged in some really loving ways. These outreaches have been facilitated through Redemption Church roughly once a quarter. As part of our replant, we are going to continue these corporate calls to serve but we are also going to integrate our Small Groups by way of committing to serving five times a year. Buggy Castro has recently gathered a Service Team together that is focused on compiling ideas for our church to practice serving those outside the church and it looks like our vision is taking more shape in this area. One potential future hire that I want to make would be someone to lead our local missions and mercy ministry. **Ideally, we need a person running point that can lead and coordinate our connections with a few of these outreaches to better bless and serve our city. If that’s you or you know someone who would be interested in this role, please reach out! Connect with [megan@redemptionseattle.com](mailto:megan@redemptionseattle.com)**

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<sup>21</sup> Timothy Keller, *Ministries of Mercy: The Call of the Jericho Road*, 11.

## Faithful Presence to Others | Church Planting

As we pray big prayers and dream together about the future, I would ask you to join me in prayer that we might become a church planting church. What would it look like to raise up a church planter from within, develop him in elders meetings, staff meetings, and on the ground, daily ministry? Imagine sending out a group of 40 people to plant a church in another neighborhood here in Seattle to establish another outpost for the Kingdom of God. What if we were able to financially help this person and team get started as they take the good news to another local community and begin making disciples through being faithfully present to God, self, and others? Is that you? **Do you know someone who senses a call to church planting?**

## How Long Will it Take?

Placing a time limit as we replant our church is shortsighted. Certainly we do not want to be in this phase forever, however, we're going to be outcome-based instead of merely looking at a calendar date; such is faithful presence. In short, our replant will be considered successful when the vision of the church is on the lips and representative of the lives of our members. We long to see evangelism, passionate worship, sacrificial service to the church and city, all being done from as posture of rest as we remain faithfully present to God, self, and others.

# Dreaming

This last section is entitled “Dreaming” because that’s exactly what this is! I’m dreaming, our staff is dreaming, our elders are dreaming, and I’m inviting you, Redemption, *to dream with us!* Here’s two things I’m putting before myself when I go into a daydream...

1. I imagine being in the crowd of the earliest disciples who were eyewitnesses to the resurrected Lord Jesus. Do it. Close your eyes and imagine. Paul says that Jesus appeared to crowds of over 500 people at once. Put yourself in that crowd. Jesus walks out into the city, you’ve seen him before, you know it’s him! Maybe you even were present on Good Friday and witnessed what he endured. Now... there he is! Standing! Smiling! Singing! Dancing! He’s embracing his friends and talking to strangers and his belly laugh can be heard blocks away! He’s got a fish sandwich in his hand and has the most endearing tone in his voice. He is alive forevermore! He defeated Satan and demons, and death! He has literally accomplished all that he and the Father intended! If you’re there in the crowd, perhaps he makes his way over to you and looks at you with a familiar look, calls you by name, hugs your neck, kisses your cheek, and says, “I love you so much. Go live!!!” My goodness. How would you respond?! What would you do? How would you pray? Who would you serve? What would you say? Who would you tell the good news to? What would you give? How would you respond? What would you say? Who would you tell the good news to? What would you give? How would you respond? Brothers and sisters, I want you think about your neighbors, coworkers, friends, and family members who have yet to experience the love and grace of God. How might you play a role in them getting to “taste and see that the Lord is good?” You could begin by simply praying for them. Beyond that, perhaps you could challenge yourself to share the good news of Jesus?
2. Imagine if money wasn’t even a challenge. God owns everything. Let’s think like it, talk like it, believe like it.

What if we got a building somewhere in our city that is strategically located to serve the needs of our church and our community? What if inside that building we:

- Were able to host theology courses for our Northwest Center for Theology and Mission (launching this fall, accredited through Western Seminary and Covenant Seminary)



## Closing Thoughts

Redemption family, I love you. I pray for you. I think about you constantly. You're in my mind, on my heart, and always in my prayers. Replanting ourselves to effectively engage our city and serve one another well is going to be a work of the Holy Spirit in us and through us. It's not about a man, a band, a brand, or anything else. Our church is responding to God and the gospel as we strive to remain faithfully present to God, Self, and Others.

Love,



P.A. Early

Lead Pastor | Redemption Church  
Seattle, WA