

Redeemer Covenant Church Congregational Annual Meeting

January 28th 2024

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DECEMBER 2023

Hello Covenant Family,

Thank you for the many ways you have been partnering and praying with me and the Covenant denominational team this year. I send each of you my gratitude and thanks! We have been through a significant season of change and are just at the beginning of living into a new ministry structure. It is my hope and prayer that these changes will allow us to resource and partner with you more intentionally as together we join God in God's mission to see more disciples among more populations in a more caring and just world.

Please know that our denominational team is praying for you too! Each of our ministry teams has selected a regional conference to pray for this year. If you would like to send your prayer requests, we would love to receive them. We want you to know there is a concerted effort to lift you up in prayer. This is one of the many ways we can live into our Three Strand Strong commitment. I pray our good and faithful God will provide for all your needs and amplify the many ways you demonstrate the love of Christ in word and deed in your community. I pray you will be encouraged even when circumstances are challenging, knowing that God is always at work. I pray the joy of the Lord will be your strength.

The psalmist writes, "Your love, O Lord, forever will I sing; from age to age my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness" (Psalm 89:1). It is an honor, privilege, and joy to serve the Evangelical Covenant Church. This past year has been full of experiencing God's faithfulness to his beloved church; from the wonderful church anniversaries being celebrated to 100 years of the gospel coming to the Democratic Republic of Congo, God has been faithful. What a magnificent God we serve! Please continue to share your stories of how God is at work in and through your congregation with us. We love to celebrate these stories with you. They are a gift and encouragement to the whole church! Looking forward, I am excited to see how God will meet our youth as they gather for Unite 2024. I know there will be new and renewed commitments to Christ as well as responses to God's call to ministry and service.

I pray every blessing upon each of you this Advent and Christmas season. As you gather in your local church annual meetings, may you reflect and marvel at God's faithfulness to you this year.

For God's glory and neighbor's good,

Tammy Swanson-Draheim, PRESIDENT, EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH

Redeemer Statistics 2023						
Baptisms						
April 9th	Mandy Duncan, Eva Duncan, Ju-Eun Choi*					
Oct 1st`	McKenna Moore; David Obinma, Elvis Obinma Jr; Victory Obinma					
Dec 31st	Crystal Lee*; Sam Lee*					
*Denotes Siloam Member						
Dedications						
None						
Member Weddings						
None						
New Members						
Jan 29th	Brian Turnbow, Mandy Duncan; Will Duncan; Sandra Finney, Vicki Rowe					
Transferred or Dropped Members						
May 12th	Philip Milbrandt					
June 6th	Carol Mahlum					
August 30th	Karen Raquet					
Member Deaths						
(Spring)	Eric Kane					
Total Membership as of 1/1/24:			114			
Meetings						
Jan 29th	Congregational Meeting					
March 26th	Q & A for Playground / Outdoor Area					
June 4th	Congregational Meeting					
Staff Members						
Mark Mohrweis	On Staff All Year					
Tre Crume	On Staff All Year					
Lori Vriend	Retired October 26th					
Michael Nguyen	On Staff All Year					

<i>Month</i>	In-Person (Avg)**	Online (Avg)*	Combined
January	86	3	89
February	71	4	75
March	80	6	86
April	84	5	89
May	81	5	86
June	74	4	78
July	68	6	67
August	74	5	79
September	77	7	84
October	73	7	80
November	69	7	76
December	84	7	91
Totals	76.75	5.5	81.66666667
<i>2022</i>	71	6	77
<i>2021</i>	57	12	69
<i>2020</i>	36	32	68
<i>2020 figures are from when in person worship resumed post-pandemic (October - December '20)</i>			
*Online represents those watching worship live. Others watch later on			
**Some weeks missing.			

2023 Senior Pastor’s Report
28 January 2024

Ministry & Boxing

When I was a kid, one the best Nintendo games anyone could own was “Mike Tyson’s Punch Out”. In the game you were a boxer named Little Mac, a 5’ 7” 100lb nobody who gets a chance to go up against the best boxers from around the globe. The challenge was daunting. Few of my friends made it all the way to Tyson. (The game itself had a reputation for being the hardest one to beat back in the day!)

This year, a pastor friend of mine shared with me that ministry today feels like a 100lb boxer going up against heavyweights. Post-pandemic church life is relentless fatigue and worry. Churches are in decline (both in attendance and financially) and there is no end in sight to political division and polarization. Year after year post-pandemic we start with the promise of return to what used to be. Year after year we end with things even worse. My pastor friend feels like he has gone 8 rounds with a heavyweight. He has made it farther than he ever imagined yet could get knocked out at any moment.

His analogy resonated with me but in an unexpected way. It envisaged much of my ministry fatigue. But it also gave me unanticipated hope: *I have not made it this far by my own strength.* (No 100lb boxer would!) Nor has Redeemer made it this far through our own strength. As we continue to do battle with the (spiritual) heavyweights of this world, we are only here by God’s power and by His grace.

The boxing analogy was surprisingly encouraging. As the Church in America continues to see its influence wane and its members struggle, there is a source of strength – one that has always been present – that we have forgotten. Back in the day they used to call it God’s providence. We need it today. It’s the only thing that can help a 100lb boxer (or church!) fight in a world of heavyweights.

2023 in Review

For 2023, our church had a theme of “Behind the Scenes”. We made a major constitution change in 2022. With that constitutional change, we knew that 2023 would require a comprehensive reorganization of our ministries. It became our key goal for the year. The chart below, while seemingly simple enough, represents a significant effort on behalf of our Leadership Team.

<i>Council Constitution Ministry Categories</i>	<i>Leadership Team Constitution Categories</i>
Worship Facilities Fellowship Discipleship Evangelism Missions Plus Categories for Admin & Personnel	<i>Commitment to Christ</i> <i>Commitment Across Cultures</i> <i>Walking Alongside Each Other</i> <i>Walking Alongside Our Community</i> <i>Operations: Administration; Personnel; Facilities</i>

As you can see, we have changed our organizational structure from six ministry areas to four ministry areas. Each of the ministry areas is rooted in our mission statement. While policy is never that exciting, when done well it can be incredibly helpful for future planning.

Our leadership team had a second ministry goal in 2023 of planning what to do with the extra financial gifts we received in 2022. In June we presented ideas which were later approved by the congregation: A donation to DASH (DFW Asylum Seeker Housing) to help Guatemalan refugees; Much needed website and sanctuary audio/visual upgrades; and money designated for future church trips (including this year's UNITE). The bulk of our work, however, was preparing a plan for our old playground area, which will be voted on soon.

A special word of gratitude needs to be made to our recently retired office administrator, Lori Vriend. In October of this year, Lori retired after nearly 20 years of working for Redeemer. So much of Redeemer's DNA is because of her faithfulness behind the scenes. We wish her well in this new phase of life.

2024 Goals

We have developed a theme for next year "Manna". As with my boxing analogy above, "Manna" reminds us that we are only here because of our daily reliance on God (and not our own strength)

With ministry categories decided, our Leadership Team has set a goal to begin working within those categories. Specifically, that means connecting Redeemer individuals with opportunities to serve in the areas where they are gifted. In addition, with new categories may come new ministry ideas. For instance - *What might it mean to Walk Alongside Carrollton in 2024? What has changed?*

A second goal for the Leadership Team is growing in our financial understanding of Redeemer. With the change to a professional bookkeeper after Lori's retirement and a complete change of ministry categories, it became clear that only a few of us have a big picture understanding of Redeemer's budget. We want to change that. We believe there is a lot of work that can be done to both develop a congregation-wide understanding of budget as well as some long-term planning that we can do.

One more highlight will take place in 2024. If the budget is approved, Michael will increase his hours adding some IT and Communication responsibilities to his role at Redeemer. We hope with his leadership we can convert a number of our administrative tasks from paper to electronic.

Singing Hymns to Myself

There's a hymn I love to sing by myself when the church is empty. It's called "Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus" The refrain is apt – my trust in him has paid off year after year. Despite that, I still doubt and worry. I need grace to trust even deeper. It seems a fitting way to summarize how I am feeling going into this new year. Grateful for what God has done. Praying for a deeper relationship with Him in '24.

Jesus Jesus how I trust him. How I've proved him o'er and o'er . . . O for grace to trust Him more

In Christ,

- Mark

Associate Pastor: Students & Discipleship
Pastor Tre' Crume

“If we are faithless, He remains faithful – for He cannot deny himself” – 2 Timothy 2:13

This verse is a reminder to me that God was faithful even through transitions, joyous moments, unmet expectations, and miracles of 2023.

Spring 2023 – **Reach Student Ministries** & **Redeemer Kids + Outreach** kicked the year off with a joint event that focused on having fun at Main Event on a Friday Evening and packaging food for students in Carrollton who need snacks via Lovepacs on Saturday morning! Below are a few other events: Reach Students hosted a lock-in with an all-nighter! Redeemer Kids + Outreach had a blast with a service



project for Teachers in the CFBISD as well as April Easter Egg Hunt!

Early Summer 2023 – **Redeemer Kids + Outreach** hosted Vacation Bible School with an estimated total of 30 students. The theme of this year was “Ready, Set, Move!” which focused on the verse: “Let us keep looking to Jesus. He is the one who started this journey of faith. And he is the one who completes the journey of faith.” Hebrews 12:2a (NIRV)

The day after VBS... **Reach Student Ministries** took the Jr.

High students on a retreat to Oklahoma with the theme of Rest and Sabbath. Students and adult leaders had the opportunity to detach from the world’s distractions and connect with each other through God’s beauty.



Thank you staff and volunteers for always doing THE MOST!

Late Summer 2023 – Pastor Tre’ (for the first time!) led a group from **Reach Student Ministries** on an inner-city mission trip to Houston, Texas! Students were exposed to the multi-ethnic vibe of the city via outings, excursions, free time, and host homes. Students had the opportunity to experience what life would be like as a missionary in the city! Here to There Movement was the training facilitators who



equipped us all on how to share the Gospel with those who have never heard it or have been hurt by the church.



Fall 2023 – **Reach Student Ministries** hosted a DNOW (Devotion Now) which is a weekend event that focused on Power: Connecting with God + Others to understand our influence in the world. This weekend included host homes, laser tag in a park (very fun), Whirly Ball, and a service project with Dallas Furniture Bank that helps those in need with furniture that needs to be built. We engaged with God’s word via morning/evening devotionals that led to talks about Salvation + Baptisms! At the

conclusion of the year, we had a Christmas theme Lock-In with more than 30 students (most ever!)

Thank You Characters for making ‘Who Sleighed Santa’ a hit! (Rudolph did it)

Year 2023 Highlights: Below are some highlights that are worth mentioning from the year 2022.

- I officially accepted the ECC position as the **Midsouth Youth Worker Coach** for '23-'24
- Six students were **baptized**, and I began discipling one college student who **professed Christ**
- I traveled to various states for the life changing **Sankofa Trip** hosted by the ECC
- **Trunk or Treat** served more kids and families than years passed (Santa and Mrs. Clause 😊)
- **Anti-Racism Discipleship Pathway** as launched by Charissa Gibson and I with great feedback
- Both Redeemer Kids + Outreach & Reach Students were able to **establish teams that casted vision** for their programs for an entire year including events, topics, volunteer, and parent engagement
- I attended Midwinter in Jacksonville, FL where I was equipped and encouraged for ministry

Ministry is Life,

Tre' Crume, Associate Pastor: Students & Discipleship

2023 Worship Ministry Report: Recap & 2024 Goals

In 2022, one of my major goals for 2023 was to remedy the audio and technology issue. With that I started researching vendors that specialized in Church audio equipment and by July 2023 we had new sound equipment for Redeemer! I believe this was a huge win for the church to really create a quality atmosphere for worship.

Regarding the praise team, we had a very consistent group of volunteers that have been very faithful the entire year. It really feels like we established a recognizable worship team of “regulars.” My goal for 2024 is to make sure this doesn’t deter anyone new who wants to join. We already have some potentially new musicians joining already which is a good sign. I feel everyone is still appreciative of the consistency of emails and music being sent out in a timely manner so I’ll continue doing that in 2024 as well. On the AV side, we’ve had a very consistent and faithful group of volunteers as well as incorporated new youth volunteers to do the powerpoint slides occasionally. I plan to keep this going and even host workshops for the audio and video equipment to get more people involved.

In total we introduced 21 new songs to the congregation in 2023 out of the 151 total songs we performed on Sundays. I make it a point to listen to current christian music and keep a pulse on what’s popular while still making sure the songs are God-centric and still fit within the culture of Redeemer. Some of the new songs were actually older hymns and liturgically-based but were never sung at Redeemer before. I believe Pastor Mark and I have found a decent groove in mixing up the worship experience and adding moments for reflection, or readings in between songs. I’ve also experimented with not having the full band performing every Sunday and just having acoustic guitar or acoustic and piano. Since the congregation has such a mix of cultures and personalities, it is good to keep trying different way to guide the congregation into a more worshipful mood on Sundays.

In February, we coordinated and performed our first “Worship Night.” This was in alignment with Ash Wednesday so it was a perfect way to bring in the congregation with music while still keeping with the liturgical calendar. It felt like a genuine event that brought in some new faces. The praise team also played at Bethel church for a joint worship in October. We were able to lead worship during Dinner Church in November which was a great event with good turnout. Finally, I’ve been able to come and perform on Wednesday nights for the student ministry, REACH. It actually inspired some of them to lead their own worship a couple of times as well. I hope to do this more in 2024.

I’m grateful for all the volunteers, musicians and overall the congregation for the amazing support and kind words of encouragement in 2023. I pray for the endurance and wisdom to continue leading and developing in 2024. Thank you.

- Michael Nguyen, Music Director

2023 Ministry Report from Redeemer’s Leadership Team

Redeemer’s leadership team started 2023 with two primary goals:

1. Redevelop our church ministry categories/framework.

2. Lead the congregation in brainstorming what to do with the excess ministry funds/budget surplus (totaling about \$187,000) received in 2022.

We had an additional goal of continuing to develop Redeemer's unique worship "voice" and expression with the aid of our Worship Leader Michael Nguyen, which was a goal that Michael was largely able to move forward with support from Pastor Mark. You can read more about the fruit of those efforts in Michael's 2023 worship ministry report.

The leadership team expended considerable effort in 2023 to evaluate different methods and models of categorizing our church's ministries, and scheduled two dedicated Saturday morning brainstorming sessions (one in April and one in August) to focus on this goal as well. Ultimately, we decided it made sense to categorize our ministries based on our church's mission statement, as that approach would be intuitive to our community and would allow our classifications to reflect Redeemer's unique culture and vision. The spending categories presented in the 2024 Redeemer budget reflect these new mission-statement-based ministry classifications.

Related to the spending of the 2022 budget surplus funds, on Sunday March 26, we held a church-wide "Q & A & O" (Questions, Answers, and Opinions) session where the leadership team shared ideas for spending the surplus and solicited input from the congregation. Ideas for future development of Redeemer's outdoor/patio space (former playground area) were also discussed in the meeting. Redeemer congregation members were encouraged to share their suggestions and opinions for applying the funds and, to facilitate this, an online survey (accessible via QR code) was made available to all Redeemer attendees for submitting feedback in advance of the session and afterward as well.

In the mid-year congregational meeting on June 4, Redeemer members voted to spend \$62,000 of the 2022 budget surplus funds in the following ways, based on input from the leadership team:

- \$25,000 to the DASH (DFW Asylum Seeker Housing) Network to aid Odilia and Francisco, a refugee couple from Guatemala who were connected with Redeemer through an ECC church in Mexico
- \$30,000 for sound equipment improvements/updates to support better quality and longevity for our sound system
- \$5,000 for church trips such as the denomination's upcoming 2024 Unite youth gathering
- \$2,000 for developing Redeemer's website and overall online presence

With the aid of the above designated funds, we were able to upgrade Redeemer's sound system in 2023 as planned as well as completely overhaul the church website with the aid of Michael Nguen, who has experience in web development and online marketing.

We have also continued to scope the development of Redeemer's outdoor patio (former playground) space throughout 2023, though slow responses to requests for quotes from contractors prevented us from finalizing a plan in fall 2023 as was originally projected.

In June, we added two new leadership team members, Charissa Rosario and Walker Moore, and are grateful for their willingness to serve and the unique perspective they bring to the group.

Also, we're thankful to Pastor Mark and Dennis Carlson for serving as this year's Redeemer delegates for the "ECC Gather 2023" (ECC annual meeting) in Garden Grove, CA.

As a team, we want to express our sincere gratitude for the support of each and every member of the Redeemer family in 2023. We look forward to partnering with all of you in 2024 and excitedly anticipate what God will do in and through our church body! -Sarah Lowe

December Giving Report

As of 12/31/23

General

General - (Less eGiving)	13,202.00	
eGiving	45,152.38	eGiving %:
		77%
Total Monthly General	58,354.38	

Facilities

Facilities (Less Rent)	0.00	
Rent	450.00	
Total Monthly Facilities	450.00	

Designated giving this month

Youth	240.00	
Penny Manna	0.00	
Back to School	0.00	
Pastor Appreciation	0.00	
Benevolence/Crisis Relief	250.00	
Church Mission Trip	0.00	
CR/Evangelism	0.00	
Advent Dinner	0.00	
Total Monthly Designated	490.00	

Total December Contributions (Less Rent, Special Items)

\$59,294.38

Actual December General Fund Contributions

\$58,354.38

Budgeted December General Fund Contributions

\$38,000.00

General Fund Contributions Over (Under) Budgeted Amount

\$20,354.38

% Difference

54%

Year-to-Date Contributions:

General

General - Excluding eGiving	258,538.68	
eGiving	169,138.85	eGiving %:
Stock gift	0.00	40%
YTD Total General Contributions	\$427,677.53	

Facilities

Facilities (Less Rent)	174.00	
Rent	8,950.00	
YTD Total Facilities	9,124.00	

Designated giving YTD

Youth	0.00	
Penny Manna	0.00	
Back to School	0.00	
Pastor Appreciation	17,630.00	
Benevolence/Crisis Relief	3,830.00	
Church Mission Trip	0.00	
CR/Evangelism	580.00	
Advent Dinner	0.00	
Building Remodel Fund	0.00	
YTD Total Designated	22,040.00	

Unadjusted YTD General Contributions

\$427,677.53

Adjusted Actual YTD General Fund Contributions

\$427,677.53

Budgeted YTD General Fund Contributions

\$456,000.00

YTD General Fund Contributions Over (Under) Budgeted Amount

(\$28,322.47)

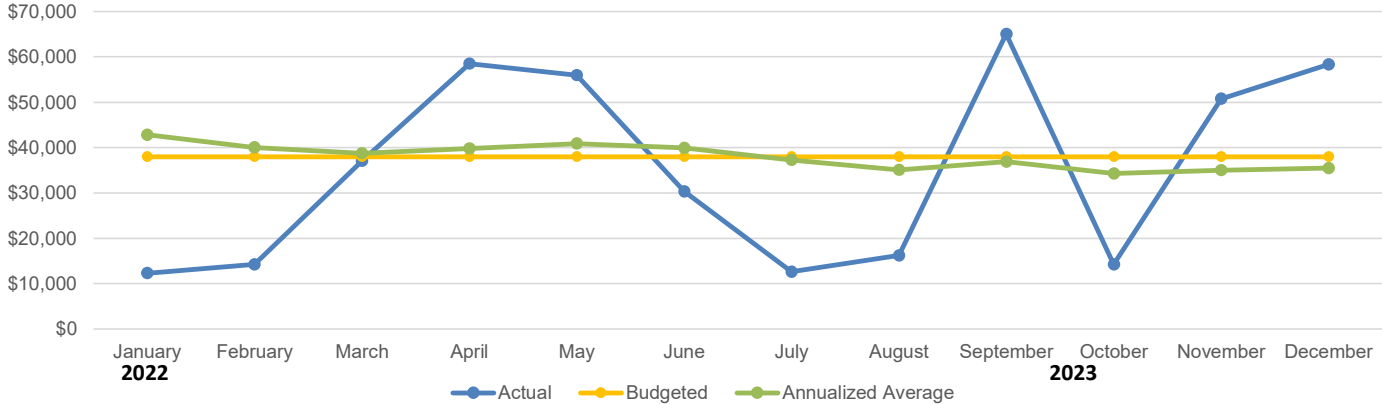
% Difference

-6%

Other Notes:

Total YTD Giving (General + Designated)	\$449,891.53
Total YTD Giving (General + Designated + Rent)	\$458,841.53

General Contributions: Budgeted vs Actual



**Redeemer Evangelical Covenant Church
2023 Financial Results and 2024 Proposed Budget**

	2024 Target Budget	2023 Budget	2024 budget v. 2023 budget	2023 Actuals	2024 budget v. 2023 actual
Resources					
Undesignated Contributions	\$ 430,000	\$ 455,000	\$ (25,000)	\$ 430,159	\$ (159)
Interest income	2,000	0	2,000	3,096	(1,096)
Rent Contributions	6,000	6,000	0	9,124	(3,124)
Total Resources	\$ 438,000	\$ 461,000	\$ (23,000)	\$ 442,379	\$ (4,379)
Disbursements					
Commitment to Christ					
Liturgy	8,790	7,290	1,500	5,234	3,556
Spiritual Formation	13,278	9,752	3,526	8,199	5,079
Walking Alongside Each Other					
Spiritual Care & other	6,150	6,720	(570)	3,868	2,282
ECC tithing	27,948	29,575	(1,627)	27,959	(11)
MidSouth tithing	15,048	15,925	(877)	15,056	(8)
<u>Commitment Across Cultures</u>					
Racial Reconciliation Ministries	2,004	2,785	(781)	2,383	(379)
World-wide Missions	24,000	24,000	0	22,950	1,050
Walking Alongside our Community					
Outreach Events	1,710	995	715	403	1,307
Community Partners	1,200	1,200	0	1,200	0
Ongoing Outreach	1,500	1,500	0	809	691
<u>Operations</u>					
Administration	18,200	14,304	3,896	7,930	10,270
Facilities	65,614	62,514	3,100	63,251	2,363
Personnel	261,523	284,285	(22,762)	277,308	(15,785)
Total Disbursements	\$ 446,965	\$ 460,845	\$ (13,880)	\$ 436,551	\$ 10,414
Net (use) or source of funds	\$ (8,965)	\$ 155	\$ (9,120)	\$ 5,829	\$ (14,794)

Cash position as of 12/31/2023

NCP - Savings	\$ 178,949
Schwab	90,668
Compass Bank - Checking	60,950
Total funds on hand	\$ 330,568

Less designated amounts:

Capital improvement fund	\$ 5,508
Scholarship fund	36,000
Crisis Relief / Benevolence	1,906
Other	38,934
Total designated funds	82,348

Net funds available **\$ 248,220**

Cash cushion (approx 3 months spending) \$ 112,000

Funds in excess of cushion available to offset

2024 budgeted cash short fall **\$ 136,220**

Committee Members:

Don Wong, Gaylon Hull
Mark Mohrweis, Walker Moore
Sarah Leonhardi, Julio Rosario

