

Redeemer Covenant Church Congregational Annual Meeting

January 26th 2025

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DECEMBER 2024

Greetings Covenant Family,

I pray this finds you in a spirit of anticipation in this Advent season. As the year draws to a close, it is important to pause and reflect on the many things that God has done and is doing, and this annual letter helps me to be intentional about that pause. There is so much to rejoice over this year.

First and foremost, thank you for your prayers! When I visit your church or you send me a note, it really does mean the world to me that you are praying. I could not do the work of the church without these sustaining prayers. Second, thank you for inviting me to be part of your church services and celebrations. I love connecting with you and am so inspired by how you are responding to God's call in your local context. Your creativity as you care for your communities is encouraging and fills me with hope. Over the last year I have had the opportunity to participate in 17 local worship services and anniversary celebrations, attend four regional conference gatherings, and attend three international events. I have seen firsthand the movement of the Holy Spirit around the Covenant's multiethnic mosaic!

Additionally, I was grateful for the opportunity to engage with our students and student leaders this summer at Unite East and Unite West. What a beautiful experience to see the commitment of students and to enjoy worshipping with them. I left with a sense of great hopefulness for this generation. Thank you for sending your students to this impactful experience.

Looking forward, I am excited to invite you to Orlando, Florida, for Gather 2025. We will be celebrating 140 years of ministry as the Covenant Church, and I have invited Covenant presidents from around world to celebrate with us. What a joyful event this will be to celebrate all that God has been doing in, around, and through our collective mission. I hope that you will consider attending this celebration in June, either as a delegate from your church or as a general conference attendee. This is a unique opportunity to be able to bear witness to the global kingdom of God and to learn from leaders around the world in person. For the latest details and updates, visit covchurch.org/gather.

For God's glory and neighbor's good,

Tammy Swanson-Draheim, PRESIDENT, EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH

Redeemer Statistics 2024						
Baptisms						
Feb 18th	Gideon Thompson					
July 18th	Gianna Bass*					
Oct 27th	Holly Hudec; Bethany Milbrandt; Noah Milbrandt					
Dec 22nd	Jeffrey (Last Name)					
<i>*Baptism at Unite</i>						
Dedications						
None						
Member Weddings						
None						
New Members						
January 28th	Chance Harry; Kristine Hudec					
Transferred or Dropped Members						
None						
Member Deaths						
None						
Total Membership as of 1/1/25:		116				
Meetings						
Jan 28th	Congregational Meeting					
June 2nd	Congregational Meeting					
Staff Members						
Mark Mohrweis			On Staff All Year			
Tre Crume			On Staff All Year			
Michael Nguyen			On Staff All Year			

Month	In-Person (Avg)**	Online (Avg)*	Combined		
January	88	7.5	95		
February	81	7.5	89		
March	94	6	100		
April	77	8	89		
May	96	6.5	103		
June	81	7.5	88		
July	75	4	79		
August	88	7.5	96		
September	89	4.5	93		
October	97	6	103		
November	97	6.5	103		
December	95	9	104		
Totals	88.16666667	6.708333333	95.16666667		
2023	76	5.5	81		
2022	71	6	77		
2021	57	12	69		
2020	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.					

2024 Senior Pastor's Report

26 January 2025

Since my youth, God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds. Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come. Psalm 71:17-18

2024 was a lesson in generational outreach for me. This year I saw firsthand the power of ministry done over multiple years (or decades!) It has been a great blessing for me to remain in touch with a number of Redeemer members who – usually because of age / moving – can no longer attend Redeemer. These individuals hold a profound gratitude toward our church and its' impact on their lives. At the same time, 2024 revealed individuals who grew up in our church develop into the leaders which the Church (Big "C") needs for its mission. God is truly a God of generations!

2024 in Review

Like any year, Redeemer leaders had some set goals we wanted to address. And like any year, the Holy Spirit surprised us with some things that we were not expecting.

In terms of our *planned goals*, we had three objectives at the beginning of 2024 which we wanted to focus on throughout the year: A financial narrative; recruiting for ministry; and building the patio.

For the financial narrative goal, we realized in 2023 that our Leadership Team and congregation would benefit from more awareness of our church budget. In response, we began using the "Big Three" image (Giving, Staff, and Property) in 2024 as a helpful picture for our members. In addition, we held a budget "deep dive" in September for our Leadership Team members, giving them an opportunity to ask questions and suggest ideas for the future, separate from our usual year-end preparations.

For recruiting individuals for ministry, we spent time each Leadership Team Meeting going over new visitors to Redeemer as well as some upcoming ministry events where volunteers were needed. After some trial and error, we have settled on an ongoing check-in for brainstorming volunteers to try in 2025.

Finally, we had money designated in January of 2024 for our patio. Construction began in the Spring and was completed just in time for 100-degree Texas weather (!) Thankfully, we were patient and when the Fall rolled around, we held a number of events on our patio, including a barbecue and Hispanic Heritage meal.

Alongside these plans, *the Holy Spirit moved in areas* which we were not expecting but excited to see.

First, an intrepid Redeemer volunteer formed a prayer team. For all of 2024, a small group of Redeemer members has been praying on your behalf weekly and led us in prayer regularly during worship. Second, the generational ministry mentioned above took place. I saw some of the kids who attending the church when I first started ('07) having become adults and still see this place as "Home". Finally, while I am not excited about it, we did have some conflict at the Leadership Team level towards the end of 2024. It was difficult and I know people were hurt . While I would never wish conflict on anyone, God uses these conflicts to refine us. I believe some of our 2025 goals reflect that.

For 2025

We have done our best to discern where God might be working and to identify areas where our church can grow. I have no doubts God will surprise us in 2025 and hopefully we will be ready. Until that time, here is what we would like to do:

- We would like to answer the question: *“What makes a good LT Member?”* The tasks of the Leadership Team are huge – spiritual, logistical, legal. In the middle of 2024, we saw the value of those with strong ministry gifts. Towards the end of 2024, we pivoted to needing those with strong administrative gifts. We think there is an important conversation in this tension that needs to take place.
- “Communal” Improvements: We have a group that is responsible for looking at our facility needs and planning accordingly. However, there are some building changes that are communal in nature. We would like to address two of them, possibly more. First, a renovation of our prayer room. Second, updating our Sanctuary banners. While we cannot get the whole congregation to vote on specifics (i.e., “blue or red banners”?), we will ask for input as we plan.
- Back to school bash (Hearts & Soles 2.0): One pleasant surprise in 2024 is that, in tandem with VBS, we helped hold a registration drive for CFBISD. Expecting a dozen or so families, we were shocked to find a line going all the way through our foyer, down the children’s wing hallway, back to the foyer and even out the door. We believe there may be some fruit in combining some sort of registration drive with shoes / backpacks / haircuts etc. Bonus news: We have money already designated for such an event through giving in previous years to Redeemer.

A Kairos Moment

In 2023, I had an encounter that stuck with me. During a Racial Reconciliation discussion, a suggested task for the group was to make new friends to live out what we were learning. In a moment of transparency and authenticity, a group member shared “I don’t have time for more friends.” The encounter was profound for me. I could relate to the member myself: Feeling crunched for time but there is always one more appointment / task / person I can add to my life. At the same time, it got me thinking about how often we in the church encourage people to ADD things to their lives to be spiritual instead of LOOK for areas where the Holy Spirit is already working.

Considering that, our 2025 theme – with help from a church across the hallway – is **Kairos**. In the Bible there are two types of time. *Chronos* is our daily schedule: “The meeting starts at 1:30.” *Kairos* is those Holy Spirit moments where we realize something spiritual or life-changing is going on. The graduation ceremony may start at 7 pm. That is Chronos. Your granddaughter is graduating. That is Kairos. This year, instead of adding more chronos to our lives, we are challenging Redeemer members to look for Kairos moments.

It is always a privilege to serve as pastor of Redeemer. But these past three to four years have been especially fun for me as well as deeply meaningful. Thanks to everyone for being a part of that.

In Christ,
- Mark

Associate Pastor: Students & Discipleship
Pastor Tre' Crume

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” – Galatians 2:20

This verse is a reminder to me that 2024 year was a sacrificial year that reaped a Gospel Centered focus on Jesus Christ himself.

Spring 2024 – Reach Student Ministries & Redeemer Kids + Outreach had a great year that was full of building relationships and fun activities. We connected with our local Carrollton community through service projects and Vacation Bible School. Redeemer Kids + Outreach had a blast with a service project for Teachers in the CFBISD as well as April Easter Egg Hunt!



Early Summer 2024 – Redeemer Kids + Outreach hosted Vacation Bible School that partnered with CFB School District. The theme of this year was “Start the Party” which focused on the verse: **“You always show me the path that leads to life. You will fill me with joy when I am with you.” – Acts 2:28.** Over 200 students



were enrolled and over 300 vaccinations were given. This was our largest VBS yet that included community partnership presentations with live cooking presentation from Texas A&M Nutrition AgriLife, financial literacy education from Truist Bank, and a Mental Health professional from the CFB School District.

We also served dinner every night to students and their families.

Thank you staff and volunteers for always doing THE MOST!

Late Summer 2024 – Pastor Tre' (for the first time!) led a group from **Reach Student Ministries** to Unite 2024 which was held in San Diego, CA. A group of 10 of us out of 41 represented the Midsouth Conference. I had the honor of leading the conference in planning, organizing, and partnering with other Youth Workers. The theme was “Rest of Your Lives” and the verse was Matthew 11:28! I baptized a student in the ocean and it was very special.



Fall 2024 – Reach Student Ministries started a new tradition of hosting dinners on the 1st Wednesdays of each month. This meant that students could practice inviting their friends into our community and to break bread together. Throughout the semester we focused on the following topics: Christian Compromise, Jesus & The Church, and Spiritual Rhythms. We ended the semester with a Christmas Party that

had over 50 attendees with older students (my first few years) and new students!

Thank You to the FAITHFUL Kids Ministry & Student Ministry Volunteers!

Year 2024 Highlights: Below are some highlights that are worth mentioning from the year 2024

- I participated in several ECC Cohorts and Trainings as the Midsouth Youth Worker Coach
- Five students were **baptized**, and I began discipling one high school student who **professed Christ**
- I continued the ministry partnership with Cru at Newman Smith and FCA at Polk Middle School
- **Trunk or Treat** served more kids and families than years passed (Baltimore Ravens Themed)
- Fall 2024 I began lunch mentoring at Blalack MS through partnership with the counselors
- Both Redeemer Kids + Outreach & Reach Students were able to have **ministry trainings**
- I attended Midwinter in Chicago, IL where I was equipped and encouraged for ministry as well as asked to co-host a night of the NextGen Conference (I was asked to lead again for 2025)
- **Redeemer Church Cookout** was the first one in years and it was great to connect as a church

Ministry is Life,

Tre' Crume, Associate Pastor: Students & Discipleship

2024 Worship Ministry Report: Recap & 2025 Goals

Building on the foundations laid in 2022 and the new sound system purchased in 2023, the worship ministry grew even stronger in 2024. We've continued to have a core group of volunteers that have settled into a familiar routine making our practices and performances run much smoother. This stability has helped prevent any potential burnout and overuse of volunteers as well.

I have a sense that everyone has found a great rhythm for longevity on the praise team. In addition to the regular volunteers - we added many new volunteers in 2024. This includes new instruments (viola, 2nd acoustic, 2nd electric) as well as new vocalists. The best part is that most of them are involved in other ministries at Redeemer, notably some volunteers come for the student's Reach program, their parents, and even other churches that meet in our building (Siloam).

In my continued effort to keep a pulse on current worship music, I've continued to add new songs throughout the year that are theologically accurate, praises God, and popular in the contemporary christian music space. I plan to continue sprinkling in new songs in 2025 to help the congregation relate to something familiar that they might be listening to during the week on the radio. And also introduce new songs to the congregation that might bring them closer to God. Outside of Sunday worship, we continued to support other events and services such as Ash Wednesday and Christmas Eve. Highlights for the year include a bilingual worship set during hispanic heritage month. This was a great set as we had one of our students sing in English and Spanish. Additionally, we had a guest band from Siloam Church perform during the Christmas season. This band was composed of Siloam students, one of which is a regular volunteer on the Redeemer praise band as well. I aim to continue that relationship and potentially recruit more musicians whenever possible.

Recruitment of volunteers is always on the radar and I hope to expand in both finding more help for the audio/video booth as well as musicians on stage. We were able to find consistent volunteers for the powerpoint and livestream from the Reach program and I hope to keep that going. Finally, I am continuing to upgrade and discuss upgrades to the Audio/Video equipment at Redeemer. These quality-of-life upgrades aim to make Redeemer run more smoothly, appear more welcoming, and keep our technology up to date for years to come. This includes computer upgrades, changing the wall clock in the sanctuary to digital, and adding a confidence monitor to the back wall so the preachers can easily see what's on the slides. These small upgrades generally go unnoticed but help to elevate the worship experience for the entire congregation. In 2025, I'll continue to make mental audits of what else needs to be improved on. Some ideas include consolidating the live stream set up to make it look more permanent. Also, potentially redesigning the sound booth to create more space for the volunteers.

Every year I am grateful for the volunteers and their consistency. Even more than that, I am grateful for everyone's positive attitudes to help lead the congregation in worship. I pray for the wisdom to make the right decisions that will glorify God to the best of my abilities.

-Michael Nguyen, Worship Leader

2025 Ministry Report from Redeemer's Leadership Team Chair

Greetings to all!

The Leadership Team has had a fun yet challenging year. In April, the Leadership Team made the move to meet in person for our monthly meetings (with Zoom always available as needed). It has made a significant difference meeting in person! There seems to be a greater sense of connection among the members and more productive, spontaneous participation.

The LT has been looking into areas that have long been in need of tweaking and reorganizing. One such area was that of Giving. With the help of members from the congregation, two leaders have presented to the L.T. a new way to approach Redeemer's giving, i.e. evaluating current and new support and making recommendations to the Leadership Team, which in turn will act as a liaison to the Congregation. This committee will meet twice yearly and consist of one LT member and congregational members.

Redeemer's benevolence policy was another area we've approached and will be revising it in 2025.

In November, there was a change to our Leadership Team due to a conflict within a ministry at Redeemer. To say this was a difficult time for our team is an understatement. Both the Staff and LT are working through this and wanting to learn from it.

Please continue to be in prayer for our church, Pastors Mark and Tre' and the Leadership Team.

All for His glory,
Julie Walker

December Giving Report

As of 12/31/24

General

General - (Less eGiving)	13,451.25
eGiving	37,808.72
Total Monthly General	51,259.97

eGiving %:
74%

Facilities

Facilities (Less Rent)	0.00
Rent	500.00
Total Monthly Facilities	500.00

Designated giving this month

Youth	0.00
Penny Manna	0.00
Back to School	0.00
Pastor Appreciation	0.00
Benevolence/Crisis Relief	321.00
Church Mission Trip	260.00
CR/Evangelism	0.00
Advent Dinner	0.00
Total Monthly Designated	581.00

Total December Contributions (Less Rent, Special Items) \$52,340.97

Actual December General Fund Contributions	\$51,259.97
Budgeted December General Fund Contributions	\$35,833.33
General Fund Contributions Over (Under) Budgeted Amount	\$15,426.64
% Difference	43%

Year-to-Date Contributions:

General

General - Excluding eGiving	181,325.65
eGiving	259,733.77
Stock gift	0.00
YTD Total General Contributions	\$445,159.42

eGiving %:
58%

Facilities

Facilities (Less Rent)	1,920.50
Rent	7,360.00
YTD Total Facilities	9,280.50

Designated giving YTD

Youth	0.00
Penny Manna	0.00
Back to School	0.00
Pastor Appreciation	7,650.00
Benevolence/Crisis Relief	3,336.00
Church Mission Trip	0.00
CR/Evangelism	0.00
Advent Dinner	0.00
Building Remodel Fund	0.00
YTD Total Designated	10,986.00

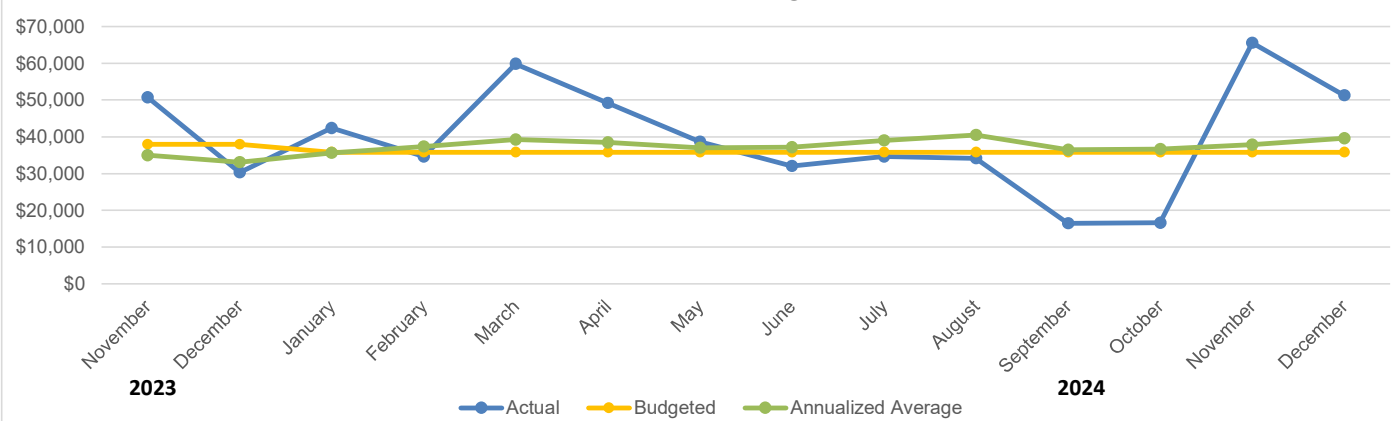
Unadjusted YTD General Contributions \$445,159.42

Adjusted Actual YTD General Fund Contributions	\$445,159.42
Budgeted YTD General Fund Contributions	\$430,010.66
YTD General Fund Contributions Over (Under) Budgeted Amount	\$15,148.76
% Difference	4%

Other Notes:

Total YTD Giving (General + Designated)	\$458,065.92
Total YTD Giving (General + Designated + Rent)	\$465,425.92

General Contributions: Budgeted vs Actual



2025 Budget Proposal

Redeemer Evangelical Covenant Church 2024 Financial Results and 2025 Proposed Budget					
	2025 Target Budget	2024 Budget	2025 budget v. 2024 budget	2024 Actuals	2025 budget v. 2024 actual
Resources					
Undesignated Contributions	\$ 445,000	\$ 430,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 447,670	\$ (2,670)
Interest income	4,000	2,000	2,000	4,353	(353)
Rent Contributions	6,000	6,000	0	7,060	(1,060)
Total Resources	\$ 455,000	\$ 438,000	\$ 17,000	\$ 459,083	\$ (4,083)
Disbursements					
<u>Commitment to Christ</u>					
Liturgy	8,940	8,790	150	7,516	1,424
Spiritual Formation	15,870	13,278	2,592	10,165	5,705
<u>Walking Alongside Each Other</u>					
Spiritual Care & other	6,850	6,150	700	3,692	3,158
ECC tithing	22,248	27,948	(5,700)	29,075	(6,827)
MidSouth tithing	13,356	15,048	(1,692)	15,756	(2,400)
<u>Commitment Across Cultures</u>					
Racial Reconciliation Ministries	1,500	2,004	(504)	713	787
World-wide Missions	34,200	24,000	10,200	24,150	10,050
<u>Walking Alongside our Community</u>					
Outreach Events	1,360	1,710	(350)	883	477
Community Partners	3,600	1,200	2,400	1,200	2,400
Ongoing Outreach	3,400	1,500	1,900	1,266	2,134
<u>Operations</u>					
Administration	19,686	18,200	1,486	13,432	6,254
Facilities	81,594	65,614	15,980	71,120	10,474
Personnel	269,475	261,523	7,951	258,968	10,506
Total Disbursements	\$ 482,078	\$ 446,965	\$ 35,113	\$ 437,936	\$ 44,142
Net (use) or source of funds	<u>\$ (27,078)</u>	<u>\$ (8,965)</u>	<u>\$ (18,113)</u>	<u>\$ 21,147</u>	<u>\$ (48,225)</u>

Cash position as of 11/30/2024

NCP - Savings	\$ 161,821
Compass Bank - Checking	111,567
Total funds on hand	<u>\$ 273,387</u>

Less designated amounts:

Capital improvement fund	\$ 6,138
Scholarship fund	36,000
Crisis Relief / Benevolence	7,155
Back to School	7,035
Youth	16,534
Sabbatical	6,199
Other	3,758
Total designated funds	<u>82,818</u>
Net funds available	<u>\$ 190,569</u>

Cash cushion (approx 3 months spending) \$ 121,000

Funds in excess of cushion available to offset

2025 budgeted cash short fall	<u>\$ 69,569</u>
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