

6:00 p.m. Welcome - Fr. Charleston Wilson

Tour begins

Our six speakers tonight each have a unique perspective of Redeemer - They represent those who are "Redeemer Lifers" - people who have grown up at Redeemer: Taylor Collins, Marsha Devitt, Patti Donnelly, Mary Page Hill, Leigh Hughes, and Jan Spangler - and we thank each of them.

Ok, a little history before we start -

- Redeemer began to "meet" in 1885. Sarasota was located at that time in the Episcopal Missionary District of Southern Florida, which became the Diocese of South Florida in 1922. This diocese covered the entire southern $\frac{2}{3}$ of the state. In 1969, the Diocese of South Florida would later be split into three dioceses - The Dio of Southeast, Central and Southwest Florida.
- In 1904 Redeemer's church mothers and fathers signed a letter of application for mission status. This was quickly approved.
- So they got to work and found a meeting hall - which proved to be "portable" - First located at the corner of Main and Pineapple
- But the congregation got too big, so they moved the building to the corner of Palm and Strawberry (now Ringling)
- And still the congregation grew! So Redeemer next moved the building to the corner of Orange and Morrill St
- But the congregation got too big for that building, so it was time to consider something permanent.

Building this structure happened quickly.

- 1947 – Building Committee, and more importantly, a Building Fund was established for this nave
- The famed architectural firm of Cramm and Ferguson of Boston was hired to design the church in an English Gothic Revival style.
- Cramm and Ferguson was and is world-renowned - noted designing such landmarks as the Cath of St John the Divine in NYC, St Thomas NY, and chapels at West Point, Sewanee, Princeton, and Phillips Exeter- just to name a few.
- The singular goal for the project: To be a "Waterfront Beacon to God"
- The project met with great community support: from parishioners, the diocese, the community at large, and from proceeds from the sale of the old church building. A significant gift was made from a benefit performance of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus. And finally, a gift was made of adjoining land - necessary to make the project a "go" - was donated by a friend – a Jewish member of the Sarasota community
- With land acquired, groundbreaking took place in 1948.

- The Cornerstone was laid in 1949 - it is located on the southwest corner of the nave, sits behind some bushes – and is the lowest point in the foundation of the church. As the Bible says, it had to be “right” for the building to stand!
- This nave was completed in early 1950 – 1st service March 17, 1950

i. And Redeemer became Sarasota’s “The Mother Episcopal Church” launching:

1. St. Mark’s Venice
2. St. Boniface, Siesta Key
3. Church of all Angels, Longboat Key
4. St Wilfred’s, Eastern Sarasota
5. St. Margaret of Scotland, Eastern Sarasota
6. Church of the Nativity, Northeastern Sarasota
7. Church of the Holy Spirit, Osprey
8. St. Mary Magdalene, Lakewood Ranch

The Tour

1. The Narthex

- Red doors – Represent:
 1. The Holy Spirit
 2. Welcome
 3. In the South, red doors mean the church’s mortgage has been paid off –the “front doors” weren’t red, but were stained just like the wood inside the church.
- Like a foyer in a house or office, the narthex is the space outside the main worship space (or nave)
- A gathering place, the narthex functions as an interface between the church and the world, a space for welcoming.
- As you enter the narthex, and head into the nave, you see the words, “Holy, Holy, Holy” above the doors.
- As you exit the church, look up. Above the doors is an icon, with words from Hebrews 10, beginning with “Let us hold fast to the profession of our Faith without wavering, and let us consider one another in love, and do good works...”

2. The Nave

- Our nave is built in a Cruciform shape – like a cross.
- The term “nave” comes from the Latin word, “navis,” meaning “ship.” This main worship space of many churches was intentionally built to resemble a ship, or more specifically, Noah’s Ark. This points to the role of the church as an “ark of salvation.”
- Look up– It looks like an upside-down boat - by design -
- From this area, the congregation can see and hear the clergy and the choir.

- Redeemer is built facing east - so when the congregation is facing the altar, all are facing east. That means the entrance doors in the narthex face west.
- The ancient “east” orientation of churches was so that all worshiped while facing Jerusalem, where scripture tells us Jesus will come in his glory at the end of time.
- Renovations have been made over the years - for example, the floors have not always been slate. Up until 1962, they were carpeted! But the nave has remained as it was originally designed.
- Of note: Did you know we have a Presidential Pew?
 - The 5th pew, on the lectern side, is where then-President Gerald Ford worshiped when he and Mrs. Ford attended services at Redeemer on November 29, 1976, during a visit to Sarasota.

3. **The Chancel**

- This is the chancel - the elevated area - right here - 3 steps up, that is populated by the choir during Eucharists.
- As we come forward to receive communion - which is our encounter with heaven on earth - the chancel is designed to represent our journey to Heaven. It is elevated and we are surrounded by our choir, representing the “choir of angels” by which we will be surrounded - in heaven.

4. **The Sanctuary**

- Elevated even higher is the sanctuary. This is where we encounter the Heavenly Feast. It is sometimes called the “Holy of Holies” – which is why it is separated from the nave by the communion rail. It is the holiest space in Redeemer’s worship space, where the consecration of bread and wine takes place.

5. **The Chapel of the Transfiguration**

- Holy Communion is celebrated daily in the Chapel of the Transfiguration, located in the north transept.
- The altar in the chapel was given in 1946.
- The chapel reredos (which is the woodwork standing behind the altar) depicts Jesus’ transfiguration, thus the name of the chapel. In its unpainted state, it was originally behind the high altar, and was moved to the chapel in 1963.
- The aumbry is where the consecrated hosts are reserved, is illuminated from above by a candle that represents the living presence of Jesus. The candle is never extinguished, except on Maundy Thursday night when the sacrament is taken from the church into the Altar of Repose.
 - Above the aumbry is a handcrafted pelican, the symbol of the parish, which was handcrafted by Gilman Lansdale in 1964. You will hear more about Gilman Lansdale later.

6. **Baptistry**

Designed to resemble a baptismal shell, the baptistry wall is beautifully illuminated with the words of the Apostles' Creed, which is the baptismal creed of the church. The lettering was hand-painted by Dorothy Herald in 1962 during the interior remodeling of the church. The gold leaf illumination was completed in 1964 by Gilman Lansdale, and you will hear more about Gilman Lansdale later.

7. **The Icon**

- Using images, the icon that graces Redeemer's high altar sanctuary powerfully portrays the history of creation from Past, to Present, and Future.
- It is entitled "Holy, Holy, Holy" – which comes from the prayers of consecration from the Eucharist.
- As you approach the altar to receive the Body and Blood of Christ, the icon reflects the centrality of the Holy Eucharist in our faith. The entire icon is bathed in the color of the blood of Christ.
- Visible from nearly all points in the church, the entirety of the icon – all 30 feet of it - is impressive.
- It is painted on canvas and was created by world renowned religious iconographer and Romanian Orthodox Nun Sister Eliseea (A-lee-si-ah) Papacioc (Pa-pa-choke), who visited then-rector Fr. Fred Robinson in 2009. Shortly after her visit, Fr. Robinson commissioned the icon. Installation took one full week in 2010 (on 40 ft scaffolding!), and it was dedicated in June 2011.

8. **The High Altar and Redeemer Cross**

- The focus of worship in an Episcopal church is the altar, as it is here that we encounter the Risen Christ in the sacrament of His body and blood. The present high altar has been in use since 1939.
- Above it hangs the distinctive Redeemer cross, designed by then-rector Paul Reeves, who later became Bishop of Georgia. It was handmade by Gilman Lansdale - yes, you heard about his work in the chapel and baptistry - and was carved and constructed in Gillespie Hall (back when we had a stage in the south end of the hall).
- It is shaped like a broad sword or Crusader's sword (Reflecting the "sword of the Spirit," found in Ephesians 6:17), and the cross is fashioned from two solid pieces of cherrywood. All ornamentals are carved in the wood itself and illuminated in gold leaf. The cross was erected during the interior remodeling of the church in 1964.
- Let's look at the ornamentation:
 - At its center is the Crusader or Jerusalem cross.
 - At the top are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet – Alpha and Omega (referencing "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last" from Revelation 22:13)

- At the left, Iota, Eta, and Sigma - the first three letters in Greek for the spelling of Jesus' name
- At the right, Chi and Rho are the first letters in the Greek spelling of Christ.
- At the bottom are what looks like ICXC and NIKA - the Greek letters for "Jesus Christ," and "Conqueror."

9. The Needlepoint

- a. The concept for the magnificent needlepoint which adorns the interior of the church originated in 1973 when Fr. Tom Fitzgerald was rector. Over 100 men and women have worked on the project, which is ongoing. Millions of stitches and untold hours have gone into this living project – which is why we don't bring liquids into the church or put shoes on the kneelers!
- b. Did you know the kneelers tell a story - What stories do the kneelers "tell?"
- In the chapel – they tell the story of the life of Jesus.
 - In the baptistry – It's the seven sacraments.
 - In the nave – the lives of the saint are chronologically arranged with 1st-century saints at the front of the nave, moving to the rear of the church through the 15th century.
 - In the choir – the kneelers depict the Benedicite (Beh-ney-dee-see-tay) – words paraphrased from Psalm 103 and 108, calling on all creation to praise God.
 - In the balcony – Old Testament stories are told.
 - There is more distinct needlepoint throughout the church- kneelers and rugs at the High Altar and the chapel altar, lining the offertory plates, and needlepoint that adorns the pulpit and lectern. We even have a Wedding Kneeler that is used by the bride and groom during a Redeemer wedding, designed by a beloved retired priest who served at Redeemer, the late Fr. James Whitcomb.

10. The Organ

- Replacing an organ that had been cobbled together for over 54 years by combining pieces from three different organs, Redeemer's glorious Nichols and Simpson was installed in 2004 under then-rector Fred Robinson with then-organist/choirmaster Ann Stephenson-Moe in time for Redeemer's centennial celebration at a cost of just under \$1 million.
- It has 47 stops. 61 ranks, and a whopping 3721 pipes!
- We can see many of the organ pipes - but there are literally thousands more behind the ambulatory, above the organ console, and in the balcony.

11. The Stained Glass

- a. Before 1965, can you believe Redeemer was unairconditioned? As we look around the nave at these beautiful stained-glass windows tonight, it is hard to imagine the jalousie windows that were once there. Those architects from Boston thought we could depend on the "tropical crosswinds" coming through the jalousie windows to keep us cool!

- b. The windows on the first floor of the nave collectively tell the story of the Salvation of Man.
- Beginning in the baptistry with Creation, what follows is the story of the Fall of Man, and the Redemption of Mankind in Jesus, wrapping all the way to the Chapel.
 - Visitors always ask: “Why is there no Easter window?” We simply don’t need one as we encounter the risen Christ every time we receive communion.
 - The theme of - and stories depicted in - Redeemer’s stained glass originated by then-rector Paul Reeves.
 - Each window – in the nave, the narthex, the balcony, and the high altar - was created by Willet Stained Glass Studios of Philadelphia. Willet windows are very identifiable by color and by design, and you can find them throughout the US and around the globe.
 - In 1964-65, all windows on the first floor were added at the same time which is very unusual due to the high cost. Each is given in memory of or in thanksgiving for blessings received by families or individuals.
- c. The balcony windows depict the words to the “Te Deum,” a canticle often sung as the censing hymn at services. They were added in 2004. The concept for these windows originated by then-rector Fred Robinson.
- d. There are additional Willet windows at Redeemer at the High Altar, in the vesting sacristy, and in the middle of our 2- & 3-year-olds nursery, overlooking the parish courtyard.

The Bells and Tower

- a. Towering 65 feet above the ground and standing as a permanent offering to the glory of God, is the Redeemer’s great bell tower. Housed within it are five bronze bells, dedicated on October 8, 1967, which day by day, week by week, call the people of Sarasota to worship.
- b. The bells are German, cast at the Perner foundry in Passau, a city famous for bells since the 12th century.
- c. Each of the bells is named and carries its own inscription.
- The Risen Christ bell weighs 3,335 pounds and has immense resonance. Its inscription: “I am the Resurrections and the Life.”
 - The Angel or Gabriel Bell weighs 2174 pounds. It is the Sanctus bell used at celebrations of the Holy Eucharist. Its inscription: “Praise ye him all ye angels”
 - The Joseph Bell weighs 1595 pounds. It is rung at the beginning of each mass. Its inscription: “O ye humble and holy men of heart, bless ye the Lord.”
 - The St. Francis Bell weighs 883 pounds, and is rung at the end of every service. Its inscription: “They are not of this world, even so have I sent them into the world.”
 - The St. Mary Bell is the smallest of all, weighing a mere 620 pounds. It is sounded as a bride and groom process out of the church following a Redeemer wedding - just before all bells are pealed. Its inscription: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord.”

13. The St. Francis Memorial Garden

Located just outside the baptistry door is Redeemer's site on the parish grounds for a Christian burial. Cremains are interred in the ground. Dedicated on June 6, 1982, the garden's focal point is a brick-work fountain depicting St. Francis and his animal friends. No permanent markers are allowed. Names of those interred are kept in a memorial book in the narthex, and those who chose to do so may have their names inscribed on the memorial wall.

14. Behind the Scenes

- We have one more invitation.
- Join us for a "Behind the scenes" to three areas we want to share with you tonight:
 - **The Working Sacristy** – is where all preparation for services takes place by the men and women of the Altar Guild
 - **The Acolyte-Flower-Candles-Brass-Sewing Room** - the shared space is where acolytes vest, flower arrangements are created, candles prepped, brass and silver polished, and sewing of vestments happens - and everyone plays so nicely
 - **The Vesting Sacristy** – is where the clergy and lay eucharistic ministers vest and prepare for masses.