

December 2006

Linking us with the ministries of our church

December Women's Fellowship

December 2: Merry Mugs & Muffins

This event is for all ladies of Redeemer. 9:30–11:00 AM Four of Redeemer's international ladies will tell about Christmas in their homelands. Special Christmas music — harp, solo, duet. Bring your own mug and pay \$1.00 at the door.

December 16: Home Tour

Five homes that are festively decorated for the Christmas season will be open for you to visit. Learn more about the homes when you purchase your ticket for \$1.00 at the church. Ticket must be shown at each home to gain entrance.

Santa's Day Off Saturday, December 16

Children through sixth grade are invited to Santa's Day Off — a day full of holiday games, Christmas crafts, a seasonal movie on the big screen and even a birthday party for Jesus, complete with cake and party favors. There is no cost, donations will be accepted, and please send a sack lunch with your child. Mark your calendars for Saturday, December 16 from 9 AM - 3:00 PM Come when you can, and leave when you must, but sign up by Wednesday, December 13, to ensure a spot for your child. Reservations can be made in the worship bulletin or by contacting the church office.

Hope: The Theme of our Eighth Christmas at Redeemer

Beginning this Sunday, we will celebrate our Savior's birth with four weeks of Christmas worship services culminating with our Christmas Eve Service December 24. Our worship will reflect our theme of *Hope* — in song, prayer and the reading and preaching of scripture. We'll celebrate advent and be led by choirs, handbells, children and readers.

Children's Program Sunday Morning December 10

Our children's choir, *Jubilee*, will present a brief and bright program, *The Candles of Christmas*, as part of our worship service on Sunday morning, December 10. The children will sing energetic songs and through drama teach us about the meaning of the advent candles.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service December 24, 6:00 PM

Our Christmas Eve service is always the highlight of our Christmas season. It's a worshipful mix of carols, scripture, special musical reflections and a stirring recitation of Luke 2 by one of our children. This service will finish with a moving candle-lit *Silent Night*.

Operation Christmas Child

Singles selected stationery. Families found flashlights. ABFs bought balls. Pioneer Girls packed pencils. Children crammed crayons. Funds were freed up by

foregoing fast food. Cherished treasures were chosen from closets. And you prayed, and you gave, and you prayed, and you gave some more.

Once again, your love for the world's children was clearly seen. Once again, your desire for God to be known was powerfully expressed. And, in the grace of God, more than 100 — 157 to be exact! — of the world's neediest children will soon feel God's love through your participation in 2006's

Operation Christmas Child. Amazing.

Last year more than 7.6 million of these shoeboxes were distributed worldwide. That's a lot of God's love being shared with a lot of kids (and their families). This side of glory, we can't know how God will choose to use our expressions of His love to others. But, we do know each box will bring joy to a child and glory to God. Thank you for your participation in the Christmas Child ministry, and let's keep praying for these children!



In a Word

Keep your hopes high

Don Geiger, Senior Pastor

It's Thanksgiving as I write this *In a Word*, and the fragrant aroma of apple pie (my favorite) baking in the oven stirs the fond hope of an afternoon spent savoring a delicious Thanksgiving meal, enjoying time with family and friends, recounting our many blessings, and, of course, rooting for the Cowboys. I have every confidence this hope will be realized. Webster defines hope as "a desire accompanied by expectation of and belief in fulfillment." In its verb form, to hope is "to cherish a desire with anticipation of fulfillment." How important is hope? Paul, in several of his letters, paired *hope* with *faith* and *love*. That makes hope pretty important! One theologian commented, "What oxygen is for the lungs, such is hope for the meaning of human life. Take oxygen away, and death occurs. Take hope away and life has no purpose."

Our focus this Christmas season is *Hope*, as our beautiful banner suggests (pictured on the front page and designed and crafted by Becky Sander-Cederlof). Thanks, Becky! Each Sunday of Advent we'll explore the joyful reality that, no matter what our circumstances or how hopeless the world situation appears, in Christ we have every reason to be *joyful in hope* (Romans 12:12). Our theme and goal this month is well expressed in Romans 15:13, *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit*. I hope we'll all memorize this verse and by God's grace make it our experience, no matter what our circumstances may be.

Hope is one of God's great gifts to sustain us in the many difficult times we all experience.

- When we're perplexed, hope calms our anxiety.
- When we're discouraged, hope lifts our spirits.

- When we're tired, hope provides the will and energy to take another step.
- When we sin, hope reminds us that in Christ there is forgiveness.
- When finances are tight, hope brings to mind the promise that our God will supply all our needs according to his riches in Christ Jesus.
- When we lose someone we love, even in our deepest grief, hope assures us that our parting is not final, and that the best is yet to come.

In one of the great *hope* passages we will explore this month (1 Peter 1), Peter proclaims our risen Lord as the basis of our hope and suggests that hope shines best in the most difficult of times. *In his great mercy Christ has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead... In this (hope) you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed (1:3,6,7)*

For many, the Thanksgiving/Christmas season is filled with anticipation and light-hearted joy, but for many others it is characterized by loss, loneliness, and memories of better days. It is for these that hope can shine brightest. As someone put it, "When life hurts and dreams fade, nothing helps like hope." The writer of Hebrews calls our hope in Christ *an anchor for the soul, firm and secure and a great encouragement* (Hebrews 6:18,19).

Whatever our circumstances, our lives this season and all seasons can and should be characterized by hope. To that end, let's make Paul's prayer our own: *May the God of hope fill me with all joy and peace as I trust in him, so that I may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit*.

By the way, the Cowboys won, just as I hoped they would.

In a word, keep your hopes high!

Better Vision with Contacts

Personal contact with our missionaries helps make our missionary program rich. Four of our ten missionary families will have visited us in the next four months. Short-term mission trips also keep us more involved and informed about our missions investments. For one week in November we learned of **Miro Cizmanski's** (Serbia) multi-faceted ministry, his musical talent, sense of humor, and heart for the Lord as he visited eleven groups within our congregation. **Roger and Suzanne Doriot** (Papua, Indonesia) joined Miro at the Thanksgiving Banquet in sharing things for which they are thankful. **Jon and Barbara Baker** (Mexico) and **Steve and Ruth Porter** (Nigeria) will be visiting the congregation in January and February. In addition to these four visits, **Mary Mitskevich**, daughter of missionaries **Peter and Tatiana**



Mitskevich, gave a report to our youth on November 5.

There is an opportunity for four individuals to teach English at the Word of Life Camp in Hungary July 7-14, and another four to teach Spanish at the camp July 14-23. Anyone interested in these

trips should contact **Paul Ramler** 972.742.7048 or pramler54@juno.com.

Forty people are now enrolled in the Perspectives course at Redeemer, which begins January 15. It's not too late to sign up to take this life-changing class. Let's all continue our faithful ministry of prayer and support for our missionaries around the world.



Above: Mary Mitskevich
Left: Miro Cizmanski



Getting to Know You: Greg and Dora Forde

Tommie Loveless

Greg was born in Hartford, Connecticut, but grew up in Huntsville, Alabama. His family moved to Alabama during the space-race sixties. "My dad was an engineer and my mom was a homemaker. We had a loving home, but we rarely went to church. My dad was an alcoholic, and he found the Lord only a few years before he died. My mom made a profession of faith in her teens, but there was not much spiritual growth." **Dora** was born in Hartford, Alabama. She commented, "My sister and I were raised primarily by our father. Our family was very dysfunctional; however, I thank God for the hard times in my life, because they brought me to Him and a realization of His awesome love."

Greg and Dora married in 1973 after dating for only three months! Greg remembered: "I asked my friend to go to where she worked and tell her I wanted to date the girl with the long hair. The problem was there was another girl working with Dora and they both had long hair!" Dora shared, "I told his friend, if he wants a date with me, he will have to ask me himself!" Later on, she found out that he had told his friend, "That is the girl I'm going to marry!" God has blessed them with three lovely children: **Tracy**, a first-grade teacher in Denton; **Lee**, a graduate of Dallas Baptist University; and **Susan**, graduating from DBU next year. Greg enthusiastically reported that they are all believers and love the Lord. Greg and Dora also have three grandchildren.



Greg trusted Christ and Dora received the assurance of her salvation in the fall of 1977 while on a visit to his sister's home. "Dora was a believer, but did not have the security of her salvation. I needed it all, salvation and security."

Greg is employed by the United States Postal Service and plans to retire in four years. Dora cares for older people and is presently a caregiver for a 107-year-old lady. "I have learned so much from these precious, godly people. My prayer is that everyone will take the time to talk with older people about their life experiences." Greg told about their land in Fairfield, where

they want to have a small retreat for pastors, seminary students, and anyone who wants to go to a rustic country setting. "We feel so at home in God's creation, and we want others to have that same opportunity."

Greg and Dora are presently involved in numerous ministries, which they enjoy. Among them are small groups, a care ministry in their Adult Bible Fellowship, and small service projects such as a coat drive and a Bible drive for prisoners. They both expressed their gratitude for their Redeemer church home and for the pastors and the entire church family. **We are also thankful for you, Greg and Dora, and we want to imitate your godly examples of faith, love, and the compassion that you have for everyone.**

Highlights You May Have Missed...

Only a few of us got to witness the baptism of **Ina McCormack** (ten years old). She was baptized on October 15 by Pastor **Bob Parry** of Cedar Creek Bible Church in Kemp, Texas. This is the first church Ina attended when her adoptive parents, **John and Jerri Lynn McCormack** brought her to America at the age of 21 months.



Beautiful weather and many hard-working volunteers made our annual Work Day (October 28) a terrific success.



