

February EDITION

redeemer



a newsletter for and about the people of
lutheran church of our redeemer

record

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pastor's message

I will never forget a cold February night about 30 years ago when I made a wrong turn in lower Manhattan. My destination was the Holland Tunnel, but I found myself in Chinatown in the midst of a very intense celebration of the Chinese New Year. The experience was unforgettable. I was scared and puzzled as to what exactly was going on. The deluge of firecrackers falling from apartment windows and exploding all around me, as well as the sheer number of people not only on the sidewalks but in the street, made me wonder if I would ever make it back to Canal Street in one piece! According to the newspaper, after a hiatus during the administration of Mayor Guillian, the fireworks are once again permitted as part of this colorful cultural celebration.

In spite of that disconcerting experience, I have always loved going to Chinatown and am fascinated by this ancient culture. One of the most impressive structures in the world is the Great Wall of China. It spans nearly 2000 miles and was built to keep barbarians out. The wall, however, proved to be not such a positive addition to the Chinese nation. Many historians maintain that it isolated the country from other cultures and in fact, impeded progress.

I recently read a sermon in which the pastor was making the point that the Great Wall of China serves as a reminder to the church. The Rev. David Mosser writes:

“When we hide from others or restrict their entrance into our lives, we can lose a fundamental source of energy, creativity and nurture. When the church turns inside on itself and fails to be like Paul – to be all things to all people – then it ceases to share the gospel with the wider cultures for which Christ also came. . . The task of the church is to reach out. If we truly believe that our faith is an incarnational faith, then it is a faith that dwells with others. One of the beginning steps of evangelism in an incarnational mode is to listen to the stories of other people. After careful and car-filled listening, we can then relate the gospel to their experiences and lives. When we do this, we are on the same page as Paul, and it’s a great page.”

(The Clergy Journal, Oct. 2002)

This year I pray that we may truly be able to reach out to those in our midst with the message of God’s love in Jesus Christ. Let us have that as our focus. And may we do all we can to make it happen.

All praises to God,
Leigh Pezet, Pastor