



A Year of Being With

**God.
Redemption.
Houston.**

Redemption Church of Houston / Annual Report / 2024





Our community had a blast at the Fall Block Party! We enjoyed food, drinks, and fun activities for all ages.

Contents

- 4 A Letter From Our Pastor
- 6 Redemption Stories
- 8 A Year of Being With
- 9 Financial Report
- 10 A Look Ahead

A Letter From Our Pastor

On a year of being with God, one another, and Houston.

I love the church. I haven't always. My relationship with her has been complex—ranging from indifference to suspicion, even downright hostility. While Jesus has long captivated me, the church both as an institution and as an act of showing up seldom did. Even during my time at Bible College, I spent my Sundays religiously in a local sports bar watching the Texans (often lose), rather than in a pew. I wasn't in church and I had no real desire to be.

This sentiment isn't unique. The significant decline in attendance and interest in religious services of just about any kind is well documented. When you add in the realities of Christian nationalism, a history of

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racism, misogyny, and bigotry its easy to understand why church has lost its appeal.

Yet, I love the church. It surprises me to admit this. I don't think I ever expected to. But what I find even more astounding is that I am not alone.

Over this past year our community has been a refuge for those who, due to their identity, evolving theology, or political convictions, have doubted the place of church and faith in their life. These individuals who believe in the limitless, boundless love of God, found the faith communities they were in imposing restrictions or limitations on that love. At Redemption they have found room to be themselves and to be wherever they are at in life and faith—free to wrestle deeply with theological doubts and questions, and to pursue political convictions which embody love for their neighbors and the vulnerable.

More importantly they have been encountered by God among us — rekindling a desire to pursue a life centered on Jesus. Someone recently shared with me that they were on the verge of abandoning church and their faith altogether but, given space to doubt and be their authentic self, they have found a renewed life of faith, experiencing the profound love of God here... at church.

This is the astounding gift church offers the world and the reason I could never fully bring myself to give up on her. We are a community which offers an encounter with God week after week, in communion with people who look and think differently than us. Together, we hold the unflinching conviction that God has demonstrated divine love for us and the world fully in Jesus, and seek to



“I see God among us — working in us, through us, on us.”

live our lives centered on this reality. The church is the church because God persistently shows up among us, extending love and hope to a hurting world. And God has done this through us, through you, this year.

Redemption I can't explain why God has chosen to show up through us. It certainly isn't because we are perfect. It certainly isn't because we've got it all figured out. But God has shown up and has promised to continue doing so.

I see God among us—working in us, through us, on us. Often, it's quiet,

imperceptible, unnoticeable amidst the hustle of ordinary life, until you pause and pay attention. I am in awe of you—in your allegiance to Jesus, in your love for one another, in your showing up expectant that God meets you in your present, messy reality.

I hope the following pages offer a glimpse of what God has been up to among us, how God has been with us and continues to invite us to embody the Kingdom of Heaven in our being with each other and with our city. And I pray that God will continue to make us an embodiment of radically inclusive hope and communion for absolutely anyone.

I never abandoned church, and neither did you. Now, I find myself loving the church, because in her, in you, I get to see Jesus.

Redemption, let's keep being the church together.

Brandon Alred
Pastor



Right: After engaging in their own age-appropriate programming, kids join our congregation for communion.



Redemption Stories

Selected stories from participants in our beautiful community.

Trent & Carrie's Story



For us, radical inclusion is more than a tagline; it has been our first-hand experience, and it's allowed us to grow in our faith within a church community. Our eldest child, Jay, came out as gay and non-binary to someone at a previous church, and their curiosity and vulnerability were met with pain-inflicting judgment and a narrow focus on vocabulary rather than the expansive love of God. As a result of that painful experience, neither of our children had a desire to

be involved or associated with church any longer. We were left without a church home during a time of confusion and frustration.

We found Redemption Church during the Pandemic and began watching services online as a family. For the first time we felt like we were experiencing a church which prioritized the radical love and embrace of God, regardless of ethnicity, sexuality, social status, or gender and have witnessed Redemption teaching and living out this loving inclusiveness over the past four years.

Raising teenagers who struggled

Redemption preaches and acts on the belovedness of every human being...

Top: Our annual wine night is a laid-back, low-key avenue where we enjoy one another. This was a night filled with conversation and laughter over drinks and bites.

to see God's unconditional love led us to doubt, fear, and frustration over how we could authentically live out a Jesus-centered life. As parents, we don't always know how to answer tough questions. As Christians, we need a church community that is safe in order to practice and grow our faith. Redemption preaches and acts on the belovedness of every human being, regardless of where they find themselves on their faith journey. Through the Redemption Church community, we've been enriched and guided to live Jesus-centered lives no matter what life may bring. We now find ourselves worrying less about questions, and accepting, supporting, and loving those around us more.

Because of Redemption Church, we have encountered Jesus' loving embrace right in the middle of messy, real life, and for that we cannot thank our church family enough. We are at peace knowing that every day God walks with (and often carries) our family.

Collin's Story



It's safe to assume almost everyone alive has had a rough few years. I am no exception. The effects of sustaining a mega-church's production during a global pandemic, broken relationships, mental health battles, and strained family dynamics threw me into a tailspin. I began taking a hard look at the evangelical spaces I was a part of and wasn't sure that I saw the Jesus they introduced me to in them anymore.

A grim reality for many who leave high control, exclusionary, and fear-

based religion is that they now are convinced that faith and spirituality are not for them. This is where I found myself. A burnt-out long time

I found a community that takes Jesus seriously and "stands on business" being a radically inclusive community of hope.

ministry staffer who was no longer sure that he had a place in ministry. That thought genuinely frightened me because I still took Jesus seriously and still sensed Him inviting me into some kind of ministry service. I found myself in an isolated place wondering "what now?"

Enter Redemption Church. At Redemption I found a community that takes Jesus seriously and "stands on business" being a radically inclusive community of hope. Through our Sunday gatherings and classes I have found a space to journey through a sort of spiritual detox, and as it turns out, there is still room for me in church and ministry after all.

Michelle's Story



Here at Redemption Church I have found a place to simply 'be,' allowing for rest after serving in churches my entire adult life.

Growing up in a fire and brimstone hyper-fundamentalist faith community I discovered I had some unpacking to do with my faith; however, the faith communities I participated in seemed to value what I could offer the community rather than simply valuing me for who I am. Additionally, I realized the seemingly progressive church I was in as an adult had unspoken limits on how I could serve simply because of my being a woman. Even through my doubts and my past, I still believed in God and didn't want to abandon church altogether.

I first heard about Redemption through a friend in 2023 and because I still wanted to follow Jesus I decided to show up at the beginning of 2024. At Redemption I found a church

"Here I found rest from the hyper-vigilance religious trauma brings."

community that gave me space to be where I was and who I am without apologizing for it. As I continued showing up, I found myself in a community where inclusion required nothing more than being myself. And I found rest from the hyper-vigilance religious trauma brings. I met God through the people of this church as I allowed myself to be cared for—encountered by Christ who met me in this community.

At Redemption I have witnessed an imperfect community that preaches, believes, and embodies an all-encompassing divine love which transcends expectations of perfection. And here in my being, and through the people of Redemption, I have been embraced by the love of God.

Being With God

Worship • Prayer • Classes

The most unique and crucial thing we do as a church is offer opportunities for people to commune with God. We believe God encounters us in our gathered liturgies and there God forms us into people of love. This year we focused on creating liturgies that were beautiful, meaningful, and true. We continued to offer opportunities to hear God speak through various voices of preachers, readers, and musicians. We added a full time position, the Creative Art and Communication's Coordinator, infusing liturgies with artistic avenues of being encountered by God. Beyond this we had 41 individuals engage in exploring questions about God with one another in our 6 different classes and cohorts.

Being With Redemption

Kids • Youth • Cohorts • Tables

Redemption has always been a church which deeply values living Jesus centered lives together. In 2024, we wanted to continue to be a place of meaningful connection. We transitioned from HUBs to Groups in an attempt to adapt to the changing context of life. In 2024 we offered a total of 19 different groups with 61 people joining one of our 11 Tables. In total 88 individuals participated in one group or another. In addition to this, we had 3 youth mentors who came alongside 8 different teens, and Redemption Kids invited 70 kids into the story of God's love for them. In addition to this we had 14 new volunteers with 83 of you volunteering with one of our teams this year.

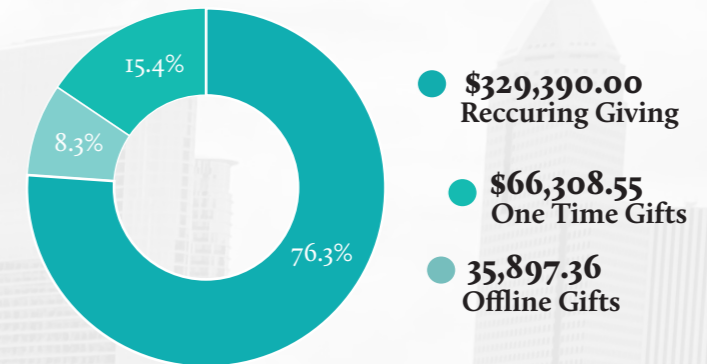
Being With Houston

Partnerships • Hangouts • Parties

We have a hope and a communion that the city we live in so desperately needs. This year as we each have sought to lead Jesus centered lives, we have all done so in the presence of neighbors, co-workers, family, and friends. The lives we inhabit, the small corners of Houston we traverse, are the spaces in which God's presence accompanies us, offering communion and hope to a weary world. But beyond our individual lives dispersed throughout Houston, we also found ways to intentionally enjoy one another while enjoying our city through a number of city wide hangouts, our parties, and seeking to make a difference in our continued partnerships with Church Under the Bridge and Longfellow Elementary school.

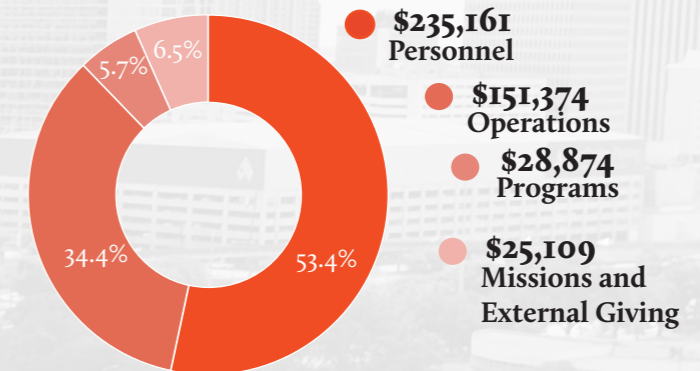
2024 Financials

Revenues



Grand Total: \$431,595.91

Expenses



Grand Total: \$440,518

2025 Giving

Pursuing Financial Health

As we close out the year, we are thrilled to report that we exceeded our ambitious revenue goal! Thanks to your generosity and commitment, we experienced a strong giving trend, especially towards the end of the year, which has positioned us well for a successful start to 2025. While our expenditures were slightly over budget, they were intentional and strategic. Investments in our infrastructure and personnel were made to strengthen the foundation of our church. We are excited about all that's to come and grateful for the ongoing support of this community. Thank you for your trust, commitment to this work and unwavering support. Together, we will continue to co-create a space where everyone can encounter the radically inclusive hope of Jesus.

Samantha Martinez

Sam Martinez
Treasurer

A look Ahead

PURSUING HEALTH

Heading into 2025 and beyond, we have been considering what it might look like for us to be the sort of Church where 20 or 30 years from now we are still a vibrant, flourishing, healthy community in which God regularly remakes and renews people's faith. Redemption is a church where absolutely anyone can seek to live a life with Jesus at the center. This has always been true of us and it will remain true of us. Yet, we are a unique church. God has situated us to be a community where people who are convinced there are no asterisks on God's love can seek to lead Jesus centered lives in a church where they don't feel the need to hide their identities, pasts, and theological questions or conclusions. This unique feature of Redemption has been true of us from the start and has provided a life-line and community of faith for many without one. For us to be this in 2054 will mean intentionally pursuing health, communion and worship as a community. So this year, we are focusing on our unique vocation as a church along with inviting you to explore your particular vocation as an individual member of this beautiful collective Christ has drawn together.



Right: At Youth our students are reminded that they matter, are beautiful, are made for love, and belong.

Health

Health as a community will always come down to our seeking to lead Jesus centered lives and be a Jesus centered church—embodying God's new creation reality in love, hope, peace, and justice in our everyday lives. No matter what else we do, if we are doing this, we will be in good shape. But beyond this we want to focus on fostering a healthy church culture, with healthy church leaders, which can continue to provide fertileground for producing a healthy

community of Jesus followers for decades to come. This includes being an amazing organization people want to work for. From our ministry team to our pastoral staff, we want to continue to care for our people. In addition we are seeking ways to add organizational support and clarity in our organization, and we are planning to put together a team to begin working on a long term plan for a permanent location for our community.

Communion

Communion is who we are, what we do, and what we are offering the world. This year we will continue focusing on being a community where more people can say they experience meaningful belonging among us. This will mean continuing to be intentional and creative about creating meaningful avenues of personal connection and theological exploration. We will continue to offer a variety of hangouts each month, pursue knowing and being known around Redemption

tables, work alongside one another on our teams to co-create a beautiful healthy church, and explore questions about God together in our classes, cohorts, and discussions. In addition to this, we are excited to start something new this year with Redemption Creative, a group of people forming deeper friendship while exploring and expressing creativity and beauty that contributes to the community as a whole.

Worship

At the intersection of our health as a church and our communion with God and one another is our gathered worship. Our liturgies are where we as a church are encountered by the living God, entering into communion and being formed by God's presence week in and week out. This makes our worship the most important thing we do. Our worship together will continue to consist of active participation, entering into a variety practices of prayer, listening, meditation, and observing the sacraments in ways intended to

form us as Jesus' people. We will also continue exploring ways to incorporate elements of creativity and beauty into our worship through the collaborative efforts of Redemption Creative, while ever insisting on authenticity and simplicity. All of this is an attempt to stay true to who we have always been as a church, while also tapping into the rich ancient traditions of the Church, in order to provide a rich and beautiful rhythm of communal prayer together.

Redemption, God has been incredibly faithful to us as a community. There is so much good and beauty all around us, seated next to us, and still more we will get to encounter in the year ahead. So continue loving, hoping, and praying. May God continue to show up among us and bring God's healing, wholeness, and redemption to us, our community and those who encounter us.

2025 Ministry team

Pastoral Team:

Brandon Alred Lead Pastor
Christine Yeh Children's Pastor
Jordan Rhea Preacher in Residence
Chantal Avery Pastoral Resident &
 Ordinand

Operations Team:

Jordan Fuller Operations
 Director
Collin Ross Creative Arts &
 Communications
 Coordinator

Team Leads:

Jodi Sheffield Connection Team
Jessica Hernandez Music Team
Jordan Fuller Music Team
Todd Parish Reading Team

Sam Hinman Youth Team
Harrison Varvel Tech Team
Nita Reyes Church Under
 the Bridge

Thank you for being a generous church.

Your generosity helps us move towards financial health as we pursue our mission.

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