



# CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

## HOPE TO YOU COMMUNITY CHURCH

7300 Race Track Rd. Bowie, MD 20715

# THE MESSENGER

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Lessons Learned from The Super Bowl LI Pastor James Choi	1-2
Tips for Reading All the Books of the Bible	2
How to Grow as a Christian Pastor Leo Genota	3-4
Purim—Emily Montfort	5
For Such a Time as This	6
Save the Date Gymkana Home Show	7
Miscellaneous	8

### Volume 17 Issue 3

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## From the Pastor's Desk Lessons Learned from the Super Bowl LI, 2017

Pastor James Choi  
Church of the Redeemer

The Super Bowl LI game between the New England Patriots and the Atlanta Falcons was an exciting game even though the first half did not appear that it would be. When the Falcons were leading the game by 28 to 3, most of us guessed that the game was over. In the second half of Super Bowl LI the Atlanta Falcons were given a 99.9% chance to defeat the New England Patriots. Against all odds, the Patriots made it a tie less than a minute before the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, and finally won the game in overtime.

I learned a few lessons from the game.



### **I. There is always someone who makes history.**

The game was historical for at least a couple of reasons. It was the biggest comeback in the history of the Super Bowl. No team has won the Super Bowl after trailing by more than 10 points. Nearing halftime, New England found itself down 21-0. That ballooned to 28-3 in the third quarter, so the odds were certainly not in the Patriots' favor. Also it was the first overtime game in Super Bowl history.

History always seems to repeat itself, but there are always people to challenge for new records. The Guinness Book Record is constantly being updated because of those who challenge.

Similarly, because of such people, our church accomplished a few things to add to the list last year.

Do you want to challenge yourself to make your own history? There is something you can try for the first time in your life and feel good about it.

It is my hope that our challenge to read the New Testament in 40 days during the Lenten season can be one of a kind this year. Don't just sit back, but let's strive to

make new history in our own lives and in our ministry.

## 2. Don't ever give up at half time.

One of my friends stopped watching, thinking that the Falcons would win, but he missed all the highlights of the game. If any of you feel defeated, for whatever reasons, I would encourage you to keep it up. You will never know what you will experience in the next turn of your life. That is how I feel about our church. I sense that God continues to encourage us in different ways to keep up with our ministry despite the challenges we face. The people of Israel remained in Egypt for 430 years in pain before God delivered them, where they experienced all sorts of God's power. Moses was called to carry on the mission of Exodus at the age of 80. Caleb, one of Moses' assistants along with Joshua, was 85 years old when he was trying to clear the hill country (Joshua 14:6-15).

Remember the Apostle Paul's encouragement, "But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.<sup>10</sup> That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

## 3. There is no excitement if you know what will happen.

I was watching the game on the computer live-stream while my family in Chicago was watching on TV. While video chatting with my wife talking about the game, I realized that the live stream was showing the game a few seconds behind the actual airing time.

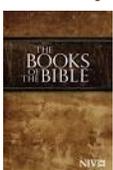
It was almost at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter and I was curious if the Patriots would tie it up and force overtime. But I heard over the phone that they scored the touchdown and were going to overtime. After hearing that, all my excitement for watching the game went down.

Sometimes we are curious about what will happen in the next chapter of our lives, but I am convinced it is better not knowing how and where God will lead us.

My wife once said that she was excited to see what God will do in our next season of life. That is so true. Let's live today with anticipation and excitement for tomorrow because of our God, who leads us and surprises us with His love and grace.

It is my prayer for us to experience abundant mercy and grace from our Heavenly Father in the season of Lent.

### Five tips for reading



1. **Read what you can. Don't get discouraged if you fall behind. Keep at it, even if you don't make it all the way through each day's reading. If you have trouble keeping up, listening to the audio version can help.**
2. **Read every day. Plan on reading five days a week, Monday – Friday. The pace is a little intense, but reading large portions of Scripture is also incredibly rewarding. (And remember, you only have to keep this pace up for eight weeks.)**
3. **Be fully present. Avoid distraction while reading. (Turns out we're not that good at multitasking.) Instead, devote your full attention to the text.**
4. **Read the book intros. The Books of the Bible includes brief introductions or "invitations" to each book, unpacking the context and literary structure of what you're about to read. Trust us, they're well worth your time.**
5. **Don't worry about the parts you don't understand. The goal is to read big, not to catch every detail. You can always go back and study a specific passage in greater detail later. For now, take in the big**

**HOW TO GROW AS A CHRISTIAN:**

Why do you need to attend our Sunday school?

Pastor Leo Genota  
Hope to You Community Church

God has an incredible purpose for your life, and our Sunday School is designed to help you connect with that purpose. In our classes, you will spend 12 Sundays diving into what it looks like to follow Jesus, connect to the church, discover your purpose and then make a difference with your life.

This class happens every Sunday in 12 consecutive Sundays, starting with Step One. These classes will help transition you from a believer to a disciple, from a disciple to a disciple maker

**Step One**

This class will help guide you through the essential steps that every believer needs to take to become a fully-devoted follower of Christ including the opportunity to be water baptized.

**ESSENTIALS 101**

This class was designed to provide the tools necessary to help each believer at Church become a spiritually mature disciple of Jesus Christ. The material in this session helps develop spiritual maturity so that fulfilling God's will for your life can be realized.

The topics presented in this class cover some of the following:

- ◆ **Salvation:** What it means and what happens when a person accepts Christ
- ◆ **Bible Study and Prayer:** Getting a grasp on God's Word and talking with God
- ◆ **Growing Spiritually:** Understanding the Holy Spirit, Spirit-led living, and how to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit
- ◆ **Fellowship with Other Believers:** The purpose of Small Groups, meeting and making friends in a large church
- ◆ **Giving of Yourself:** Areas of giving, the blessings of giving, and the giving attitude

**Step Two**

This class will give you a basic introduction to the story, beliefs and structure of Church as well as a guide for how you can get connected and join the church.

**CHURCH 201**

Church 201, is the basic introduction to our church family. Since we have members from many different church and non-church backgrounds, this class was designed to clearly explain who we are and what we believe. The topics covered in this class are described below.

- ◆ **Church's Story:** who we are, where we have come from, and our focus today
- ◆ **Our Purpose Statement:** why we exist as a church and how we carry out our purpose as a church, including explanations about services, Small Groups, Growth Track, and the CARE Team.
- ◆ **Our Beliefs:** four essential truths we believe and teach (Our full Statement of Faith is also made available.)
- ◆ **Our Structure:** Church government, leadership, and finances
- ◆ **Our Hope for You:** Next Steps; what does Church membership look like; review the Church Membership Covenant

### Step Three

This class will help you discover how God uniquely created you. Through understanding your personality and spiritual gifts, you will be prepared to serve others in the way God designed. Step Three takes place the third Sunday of every month.

### **DISCOVERY 301**

This class, offers a step toward understanding how your uniquely designed personality, coupled with the spiritual gifts that God has given you, helps reveal a fulfilling path to your destiny. By completing personality/leadership style and spiritual gifts assessments, next steps to becoming involved in the ministry area of your passion are easily determined.

The topics covered in this class include:

- ◆ **Discovering Your Personality:** How personality is developed and exploring different areas of your personality
- ◆ **Complete the Simple DISCOVERY analysis:** Determine your most prominent Personality/Leadership Style
- ◆ **Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts:** Learn what spiritual gifts are not and how to receive spiritual gifts
- ◆ **Complete the Spiritual Gifts assessment:** Determine your primary God-given spiritual gifts and understand what they are
- ◆ **Passion Assessment:** Questions that help to narrow down areas of highest interest to you
- ◆ **Some Next Steps and Putting It All Together:** Discover more about areas of ministry at Hope To You and Church of the Redeemer that you are uniquely designed to be gifted for; meet the leaders of our ministry teams; explore ways that will fulfill your passion to worship serve

### Step Four

### **CARE Team 401**

This class helps you understand the discipleship process, how to volunteer and how to get connected to a ministry team at Church based on your personality and spiritual gifts that you discovered in Step Three, you will be able to attend an orientation to the team that best fits your design.

The topics covered in this class include:

- ◆ **The Process of Discipleship:** discover the profile of a disciple and the process we use to get them there.
- ◆ **Building a Volunteer Culture:** learn what it means to volunteer
- ◆ **Orientation:** Connect to a ministry team that best fits you.
- ◆ **Graduation:** give a certificate of completion to all participants who finish all the requirements

## Purim

This year from sundown on Saturday, March 11, until sundown on Sunday, March 12, Jews everywhere will be celebrating Purim. Purim is the Feast of Esther. The book of Esther is the only book in the Bible in which God is never mentioned. This has traditionally been explained as being connected to “the hidden face of God” because, although God is not mentioned in the book of Esther, God is obviously involved throughout.

Purim has always been one of my favorite holidays. My inner child thrives on holidays like this one, with fun, good food, and joyful interactions with others.

Purim, the Feast of Lots, is a joyous festival, telling the story and celebrating the saving of the Jews from a massacre intended to wipe out every Jew in the Persian Empire. The celebration is a time filled with eating and drinking, with gladness and a bit of silliness. It’s also a time of gift-giving and tzedakah (charity). *Therefore the Jews of the villages, who live in the open towns, hold the fourteenth day of the month of Adar as a day for gladness and feasting and holiday-making, and a day on which they send choice portions to one another. Esther 9:19 RSV*

The story of Esther is the story of survival. Passover is a story of liberation, but is a serious observance for the most part. The plagues aren’t celebrated, but seriously observed. There is joy in the remembrance of liberation and redemption, but the occasion is not filled with giddiness, like Purim. Purim brings people out in costumes (often as characters in the story) and masks (again reflecting the hidden face of God). As the megillah (scroll of the story of Esther) is read in the synagogue (twice during the holiday), whenever the villain Haman is mentioned, the people blot out his name with noise — using noisemakers [groggers] for the most part, but by whistling, hissing or shouting if one doesn’t have a noisemaker. Often a Purim shpiel (Purim play) is performed, which pokes fun at synagogue members and community leaders.



Wooden Grogger

The story of Esther is the story of anti-Semitism, attempted genocide, and ultimate survival. It is the story of heroism, as Esther lays her life on the line in defense of her people. Throughout the centuries, as the Jews have faced persecution, they’ve turned to the book of Esther for the hope it gives. Even in the concentration camps in World War II, the story of Esther gave prisoners hope that Hitler’s “final solution” would fail, and that the Haman of their time (Hitler) would meet the same fate as the Haman of Esther’s day.

God promised His people He’d always leave a remnant of the people and would watch over them. Esther is a perfect example of His faithfulness. The Jewish people are the only people to have survived as a people without a land, and they survived many centuries in the diaspora without losing their character as a people with their religion and culture reasonably intact. And it is in a diaspora that the story of Esther takes place. So even in the darkest of times, and in places far from “home” the book of Esther brings hope and the reminder that God is there wherever you may be and whatever you may be facing.

The book of Esther isn’t very long. If you haven’t read it for a while, I recommend that you do so.

## For Such a Time as This

Emily Montfort

*“For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”* Esther 4:14

Because Purim takes place this month, this verse – probably the best known and most quoted verse in the book of Esther – always comes to mind at this time of year. The truth of what Esther’s kinsman Mordecai told her is as true for us today as it was for Esther. God’s plans, that He invites us to take part in along with Himself, will certainly be fulfilled. If we serve Him by working with Him, we will know the joy of being a faithful servant. If we don’t – if we hesitate or decide that this just doesn’t fit us – He’ll still do what He intends; but we will miss out on the blessing, we will lose out.

One of the advantages of age is hindsight. I can look back and see God’s hands in situations where I failed to see them while going through them. I can see times when I’ve acted on a gut feeling (i.e., the prompting of the Holy Spirit, even if I failed to recognize it as such) and have been amazed at the results -- and times when I’ve failed to act when faced with similar prompting and later regretted it. I’ve also learned that I’m really terrible at trying to read God’s mind...that what I think are the reasons He places me in a particular place at a particular time are not at all what He had in mind.

One particular instance took place several years ago. A friend was conducting a workshop on grief at a retreat in Pennsylvania, her first time doing so. I went along to offer her moral support. We allowed plenty of time to get there and arrived early. I went down to the fellowship hall to get a pastry and a cup of coffee. As I sat there enjoying my mini-breakfast an older woman, Barbara, sat next to me. I greeted her and, to get a conversation started, asked which programs she was interested in. She replied that she didn’t even know why she was there, that it was a Christian program and she was having a lot of trouble with God. When I asked why, she said she didn’t know if she even believed in God any more. Her grandchild had died recently and she wasn’t sure if there was a God or, if there was a God, if he was good. She said she had only come because her daughter was also conducting a workshop and asked her to come (and had brought her there). Because I myself had gone through a similar crisis of faith following the death of a dear friend when in college, I was able to commiserate with her and to share with her from my own struggle. I also suggested she attend my friend’s workshop.

She did attend the workshop. However my friend’s approach was mostly clinical and filled with “how-to” suggestions, and I realized that was not what Barbara needed. So when she asked a question, I asked my friend if I could try to answer her. God certainly gave me the words because I found myself pulling up a verse from the Bible that I didn’t even know I knew. Then I told her that no matter how distant God might seem, He was still there, and that it was o.k. to rant at Him because He understood, and that he weeps with her when she weeps. I told her that, as my friend had said, grief is a process and moves at its own speed. But I said, that’s true with God, too-- that just as He takes you where you are when you first come to Him and then moves you along toward spiritual maturity at the speed you need, so too does He take you where you are in your grief and goes along with you as you go through it, and helps you bear it, no matter how long it takes.

Later that day Barbara’s daughter came to me to thank me for spending time with her mother. She asked me where I went to church and when I said it was in Maryland, she asked what brought me to that program in Pennsylvania. I replied that I didn’t know it when I signed up, but that apparently God brought me there for her mother.

Ever since then I’ve tried to be cognizant wherever I am that God may have brought me there for a reason that I may have no inkling of. I know that, if I’m open and willing to be used by Him, He will make use of me – not because of me, but all too often in spite of me. I just have to be willing and respond with whatever and whomever He places on my path, and His blessings will abound as His plan comes to fruition. I may not see them, but I know He is faithful, so I know they will happen.

Wherever you may be, who knows why God has brought you there at this time? God knows. Trust Him and go along with whatever He has in mind for you. Be a blessing and reap blessings in return.

**GYMKANA HOME SHOW**  
 April 21 and April 22, 2017 - 7:00PM  
 Xfinity Center, College Park, MD:



**MARK YOUR CALENDAR You don't want to miss this!**

The University of Maryland Gymkana Troupe is hosting its annual gymnastic exhibition, showcasing high-flying acrobatic circus performances. Come witness this incredible 2-hour show filled with breathtaking routines, including the famous vaulting act where performers launch off of mini-trampolines, avoiding collisions, and flip through a ring of fire! Cheer on the Troupe as they demonstrate how healthy living allows one to soar above the influence of drugs and alcohol.

Each year the University of Maryland Gymkana Troupe tours Maryland and neighboring states, performing action-packed acrobatic circus performances and promoting an anti-drug message to students. The April Home Show is GymkanaTroupe's biggest show of the year. Acts Include:



Aerial Silks



Beam



Chairs



Dance



Double Mini-Trampoline



High Bar



Ladders



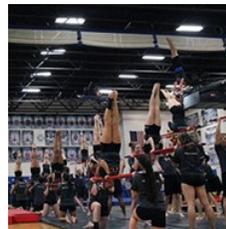
Parallel Bars



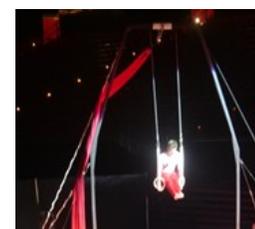
Partner Balancing



Pommel Horse



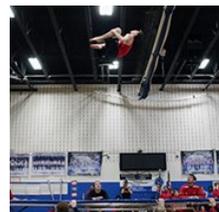
Pyramids



Rings



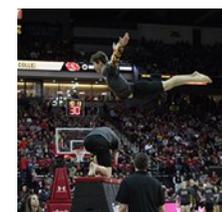
Teeter Board



Trampoline



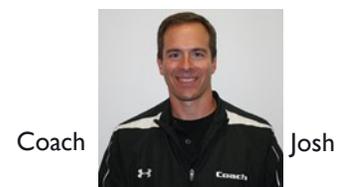
Tumbling



Vaulting

Great show for the young and the young-at-heart, from 4 to 104.

Some of these pictures I took at 2016's Home Show; others I copied from Gymkana's website. Another reason to attend...,EM's #2 son



Coach

Josh

**Happy Birthday to:**

- Matteo Swartz** 6th (8 years old)
- Dee O’Fiesh** 8th
- Cynthia Choi** 9th
- Sue Leatherwood** 22nd
- Christopher Rohme** 23rd
- Karl Nilson** 23rd
- Lanz Genota** 23rd
- Rojoyce Ndogo** 24th
- Edward Wulff** 24th



**Happy Anniversary to:**

**Jim and Jean Klapp** 20th



**Volunteers:**

**Usher: Ellen Layman**

**Scripture Readers:**

- Please sign up to read
- March 5 Jerry Cates
- March 12 Teanisha Cates
- March 19 Ruzzel Castaneda
- March 26 Lauraine Genota



**DO YOU WANT TO FAST THIS LENT?**  
*In the words of Pope Francis*

- Fast from hurting words and say kind words.
- Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.
- Fast from anger and be filled with patience.
- Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.
- Fast from worries and have trust in God.
- Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.
- Fast from pressures and be prayerful.
- Fast from bitterness and fill your hearts with joy.
- Fast from selfishness and be compassionate to others.
- Fast from grudges and be reconciled.
- Fast from words and be silent so you can listen.

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**Treat Providers for March:**

*Hope to You*  
*Redeemer Fellowship Committee*

**Special Offerings - 2017**

**Quarterly and Special Offerings:**

March: Bowie/Crofton Pregnancy Center	\$
April: World Missions	\$
June:	\$
September:	\$
November; World Relief	\$
December; Supported Missionaries	\$

**Special Offerings**

Mission to be announced	\$ 15
	\$

**Other/Ongoing**

Samaritan’s Purse	\$
Ndogo Support	\$ 1,020
Bowie Food Pantry	\$
Benevolence Fund	\$
Covenant Support Missionaries	\$

**Heart-to-Heart**

**Lunch – Wednesday, March 8, 1:00 pm at Anthony’s, Free State Mall, Bowie**



**Dinner — Wednesday, March 22, 5:00 pm at Outback, Hilltop Plaza, Bowie**



**I NEVER UNDERSTOOD WHY GOING TO CHURCH MADE YOU A HYPOCRITE, BECAUSE NOBODY GOES TO CHURCH BECAUSE THEY'RE PERFECT.**

**IF YOU'VE GOT IT ALL TOGETHER, YOU DON'T NEED TO GO. YOU CAN GO JOGGING WITH ALL THE OTHER PERFECT PEOPLE ON SUNDAY MORNING. EVERY TIME YOU GO TO CHURCH, YOU'RE CONFESSING AGAIN TO YOURSELF, TO YOUR FAMILY, TO THE PEOPLE YOU PASS ON THE WAY THERE, TO THE PEOPLE WHO WILL GREET YOU THERE, THAT YOU DON'T HAVE IT ALL TOGETHER. AND THAT YOU NEED THEIR SUPPORT. YOU NEED THEIR DIRECTION. YOU NEED SOME ACCOUNTABILITY, YOU NEED SOME HELP.**

**- Rich mullins**