

# REDEEMER COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

## NEIGHBORING

Immanuel, God-with-us, describes God's closeness with humanity. Regardless of weakness, hypocrisy, ignorance, and indifference, God stays intimately involved with his people. This stands in such contrast with our inclinations: to retreat, hide, and self-protect. Our two-fold testimony this year is this: when we live and work in solidarity with our neighbors, Immanuel journeys with us revealing his presence. Secondly, in situations and places we are most inclined to avoid, God has plans for transformation!

This year we saw faith the size of a mustard seed move a mountain. The City ordered Sentinel Peak Resources to close and clean up their toxic oil drill site in our neighborhood. Generations of children will now grow up healthier and safe from catastrophic disaster. How does a ragtag volunteer army of neighbors drive a \$38 billion oil company out of their community? The one who calls us to love our neighbor brought us along in this improbable victory.

When we pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, in the neighborhood as it is in heaven" God restores vision to our hearts. We realize that if heaven has no place for oil drilling that sickens children, then neither should our community. We also realize that if heaven's streets aren't listed on the "High Injury Network", then the ones we walk along shouldn't be either. This year, Kingdom vision led us into strategic effort and creativity, as God made us partners in building safer streets. Soon, a \$7 million investment will transform a hazardous boulevard into a safe and beautiful experience for neighbors to walk, bike and roll in wheelchairs. For



the one who calls us to love our neighbor, every day is "take your son or daughter to work day." God loves to bring us into his workplace, where we see up close how mercy flows and miracles unfold.

By praying and laboring to see God's kingdom come, not just in a general sense, but right here in the places we live, we touch the holy reality of Immanuel, God-with-us. We experience his encouragement and restoration when the days are long, when conflict erupts, when our best plans are thwarted. And we comprehend more of the height and depth and width of his love with every small victory: fossil fuels staying safely in the ground, fewer pedestrian fatalities, trees taking root, neighbors forming friendships and children becoming confident readers.

We are so grateful for your partnership. We hope these miracles, these answered prayers, these transformations are for you signs of Immanuel calling, perhaps inviting you to join him in new projects. In this season of Christmas, we pray that the joy of Immanuel would flow through your own heart and neighborhood.



## A Time to Grow

My professional career at the University of Southern California began early as I worked my way through college. For the next three decades I launched and led urban research centers on Southern California, immigrant integration, urban poverty, policing preservation of life strategies, environmental sustainability solutions and more. Embracing Jesus' call to move to South LA in the weeks following the LA Riots in 1992 opened an unexpected and meaningful career path.

Over the years, a flexible work schedule and miniscule commute gave me the bandwidth to launch and lead Redeemer Community Partnership. However, each promotion reduced my time in the neighborhood, while my desire to fully engage the work of community building increased.

A year ago, Anna and I began to prayerfully discern whether it was time to depart USC. We wondered if we could afford to leave and how we would secure healthcare. Redeemer's board generously offered us a two-year financial runway to get off the ground. We decided to take a leap of faith. Unexpectedly, USC offered me an "early retirement" incentive. I was surprised, not considering myself anywhere near retirement but, apparently, I was the youngest person to qualify. Then in May, USC hired Anna part-time as a student advisor for a professional doctorate program. This position came with a continuation of our medical plan and access to our family doctors.

In August I began full-time work with Redeemer Community Partnership! Every day I am filled with gratefulness for the work entrusted to us. This gift of time will mean an expansion of our work to build a safe, healthy, opportunity-rich community where children and their families thrive.

Having closed one toxic drill site we are turning our attention to a second. Having secured funding to re-imagine one High Injury Network street, we have started work on Normandie Ave. a flash point for the 1992 riots. We are leaning into an exciting opportunity to build a park in our neighborhood. And we are giving thought to how we can address the toxic air pollution that is robbing kids of lung capacity and shortening the lives of our parents and grandparents. This last challenge is a regional issue that cannot be solved locally and so we are prayerfully examining whether we can bring the broader church together to improve children's health regionally.

I am so grateful for this opportunity and for each one of you who partners with us to make it possible. This has been a year of miracles. It seems that there are other mountains that the Lord is calling us to move by faith.

Grateful for your partnership,

Richard Parks  
President