



Gossip hurts. Untrue gossip devastates.

Every little item of gossip is like a shard of broken glass—stained glass. If true and aligned correctly, they blend together in beauty. But what if the gossip is false?

Take those broken shards of stained glass and dump them into a tube. Peek at them through a filter of mirrors. An innocent twist will add to the illusion.

None of it is real. It is all made up of broken glass that has the power to cut and penetrate the skin and cause great harm.

In East Falls we know the power of gossip. Much of it comes from clergy.

Clergy are trusted. No one checks facts. After a few years—the coffee urn gossip may as well be Gospel, even if it was never true.

Here are six prevalent stories that resulted in our land being seized and our faith community dragged through courts for six years. The pattern of lies is far more intricate than we can tell. There are dozens of tiny shards adding to the pain. Make the story more interesting. Turn the kaleidoscope.

Written by Judith Gotwald

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Gossip is the major tactic in a complex strategy to circumvent ELCA church order. It creates an illusion of a troubled congregation in need of synodical intervention—a step toward seizing a congregation's assets.

Congregations pay a steep penalty when church leaders make mistakes.. Bishop Almquist attempted a land/asset grab, putting our congregation in a position where we had to resist. We did so successfully, but it took two years. The reputation in the cloistered clergy world is that the problem was all the congregation. **There was no conflict beyond the property claims.**

The foundational thinking is that congregations will accept a regional body's assessment without question—although the constitutions give congregations significant say—and property rights.

Forums for discussion are tightly controlled or non-existent. Clergy become gossip agents, creating a troubling view of today's clergy.

Can congregations trust that the clergy they call serve their interests? Three of our former pastors were part of the gossip in recent years. Two were popular pastors. What could influence them to hurt the congregation they served? Will our people trust a pastor again?

In our case, we were denied voice and representation—creating a breeding ground for gossip. When there is no way to challenge gossip, words meant for entertainment, quickly become character assassination, slurring lay leaders and entire congregations, causing lasting damage.

Sadly, this strategy could have been stopped by a few clergy speaking up, if only to demand that the situation be reviewed more carefully.

Six of the most blatant lies we've been hearing for years follow. This is our belated response.



LIE 1

We tried to have the bishop arrested.

My, this story has grown! The most recent tellers have the bishop in handcuffs in the back of a squad car.

Telling this story effectively grabs attention and tends to justify more gossip. *Those awful people!* But it never happened.

Bishop Burkat came to our congregation on a day she was warned the congregation could not meet with her. Her unstated objective, as we suspected correctly, was to leave with our property.

Here is an eyewitness account circulated to members at the time in February 2008 and revised and published on 2x2virtualchurch.com in 2011.

In mid-February, Bishop Burkat sent a letter to Redeemer members announcing she was closing our church and announcing an afternoon congregational meeting on the same day that the congregation had already noticed its annual meeting in the morning. There had been no discussion with the congregation or its leaders about closing the church, which in the previous year had accepted 49 new members and had many more interested.

Bishop Burkat's letter to the congregation stated that the purpose of her proposed meeting was to "plan a closing worship service."

The day the bishop had chosen without consulting Redeemer leaders was a day already filled with activity. Redeemer was not a dormant, dying congregation as the bishop had depicted but an active, vibrant church with a busy calendar. On this day, worship was to be at 10 am with a congregational luncheon at 11:30 followed by the annual business meeting of the church which had been properly noticed to all members. In addition, many of our members were planning to attend a family party for Pastor Mutashoby's birthday in the afternoon. We informed Bishop Burkat through Pastor Davenport, directly by email, and in a written letter that the congregation did not wish to meet that afternoon.

In addition, we questioned the bishop's constitutional authority to call congregational meetings — and a bishop's right to declare congregations "closed" without consulting with the congregation or its leaders. The constitution says that special meetings of the congregation may be called by the congregation president, the pastor, or by petition of the members.

On Sunday, February 24, 2008, Redeemer's Congregation held its annual meeting as planned with a healthy quorum in attendance. We decided to cancel the luncheon. A sizable number were headed to a family party.

The congregation approved the Five-Year Plan, which, along with a resolution to call Pastor Festo Mutashobya, had been shared with Bishop Burkat on November 1, 2007, the last time the bishop had spoken with us. Closing the church had not been discussed at that meeting. The meeting had closed with Bishop Burkat promising that we could work with Rev. Davenport in implementing our plan. The bishop had yet to follow through on any of the promises she had made at the November meeting. Regular calls to her office had gone unreturned.

As the Congregational Meeting ended, the congregation asked Stanley Meena and me to please be at the church that afternoon at 3 pm in case Bishop Burkat ignored our three notices. The pastor was unavailable due to the family party.

I arrived at 2:45 pm and stayed in my car across the street from the church in front of the public library where there is a good view of the church property. If the bishop arrived I did not want to confront her alone. I was waiting for Stanley Meena. It was my intent to simply drive home if the bishop did not come.

People started arriving. Bishop Burkat was among the first and was quickly joined by Rev. Patricia Davenport. Others soon joined them, including all four "trustees" (Tracey Beasley, Lee Miller, Ray Miller and Larry House). There were also several others unknown to us in attendance. There were nine or more (four trustees, bishop, bishop asst, lawyer, and at least two others unidentified) far more than needed for the declared purpose of the meeting. According to the constitution, if a special congregational meeting is declared it must adhere to the proposed topic.

The group was gathering on the sidewalk along Midvale Avenue near the steps to the front door. Before the full group had arrived, Bishop Burkat walked by herself to the corner of Midvale Ave. and Conrad Street and then up the sidewalk along Conrad Street to the rear of the property. She stood at the back corner of our lot and looked up Penn Street. She then returned to the front of the church.

When Rev. Lee Miller arrived, he and a companion (another man with his hair pulled back into a ponytail) went to the church door and tried it. The two then went to the side door and tried it. They disappeared behind the church where I can only assume that they tried the nearest back door. There is a second rear door behind a wall, which I assume they did not try because we found it propped open later. They then returned to the front of the church.

Synod's lawyer was also present. The bishop talked with him privately on the corner and the lawyer then walked away.

At some point — a bit late, two members of Redeemer arrived. Neither of them had been attending for many months and one had told us she was leaving. They did not participate and did not stay long.

When Stanley arrived, we both approached the group. Stanley was on the sidewalk. I stayed on the street, not crossing a pile of plowed snow. I asked

the bishop why they were present when we had informed them that the congregation did not wish to meet. Bishop Burkat acknowledged that she received notice but asked, "Then why are you here if we are not meeting?" I responded, "I am here to protect our property." I explained that the congregation had decided to not meet. Rev. Ray Miller quipped, "And how many were at that meeting—two?" I responded that the meeting had included the entire church council (10), two pastors and five congregational members. This group decided we should not meet to plan a closing service when there was no congregational decision to close.

Stanley noticed a locksmith truck drive by and commented with shock. He had heard a rumor that Bishop Burkat had boasted at a meeting in Chicago (national church headquarters) earlier in the week that she intended to come to our church with a sheriff and a locksmith on Monday (the next day). The quote from someone in Chicago was "She said, 'I have the power to close that church and I intend to close it.'"

There was a little confusion. Pastor Davenport said, "This is a bad witness" and suggested we not meet today. I agreed that it was a terrible witness. She then suggested we all pray. Stanley joined them in prayer. I waited on the road.

After Pastor Davenport's prayer, Bishop Burkat told Stanley and me that we could "return to our respective cars." We said nothing in reply. Both Stanley and I stayed put.

The Bishop started toward the door. I said, "We are not opening the church." She continued edging toward the door. I said, "If you try to enter our church without our permission, we are prepared to call the police." Rev. Lee Miller, who was also moving toward the door, spun around and said, "You would have the bishop arrested?" I responded, "I don't want anyone to be arrested. I want you to leave." I elaborated that property ownership was a legal issue and should be resolved through legal channels.

The group then began to disperse. Lee Miller began to comment to me, "If you'd just talk with us . . ." I interrupted him and said, "Level the playing field and we will talk. This is not a fair forum."

When it appeared that all had left, Stanley and I returned to our cars. I determined to wait for a while, following a gut feeling that this was not over.

Stanley was parked beside the church and he too waited a bit. After about five minutes, I saw him pull away and round the corner in front of the church, heading up Midvale Ave. I decided to wait still longer. Then I spotted Stanley's car coming down Conrad Street. He had circled the block. He pulled next to a work van parked on Conrad Street. He blocked the van in. A man got out of the van. From a distance I could not tell who it was, but I thought, "He's awfully well dressed to be sitting in a work van." I got out of my car and started across the street. By the time I got there, Stanley was talking to the man. It was John Gordon, the synod's lawyer. The van was the locksmith van that had passed by earlier. Stanley called our lawyer on his cell phone and handed the phone to John Gordon. The lawyers talked. I remember one thing John Gordon said in the one side of the conversation I could hear—"The good guys have left."

Our lawyer reported later that he was telling him there would be no changing of locks without a court order and that he would call police if they did not leave the property immediately. He did not take this action, but just then two police cars passed by as is common in the city. John Gordon quickly made for his car, forgetting he was holding Stanley's phone. He turned and handed the phone to me, nearly dropping it, jumped in his car and sped away. His car had been in front of the van and his departure gave the van room to pull out. The driver of the van lost no time in following Gordon.

Stanley checked the doors, finding the farther back door propped open. We wondered why but when we told our members, one remembered that after church, one of the children had been outside and one of the teenagers left the door propped so that he could get back in. Stanley then left.

I waited another 15 minutes or so. I also returned the next morning and watched the property in case they returned on Monday as the bishop had pledged in Chicago.

It is clear in retrospect that Bishop Burkat, when she hiked to the back of the property, was looking behind the building for the locksmith van. It is not a great leap in logic to assume that she had instructed the locksmith to park behind the church and out of sight.

There was never any threat to have the bishop arrested as the trustees reported throughout the synod and continued to claim even after we wrote asking them to correct the record. The police were never called. The entire confrontation was unnecessary and forced Redeemer into a defensive stance before there was any attempt at dialog.

What would your congregation have done under the same circumstances?

We suggested that the police be called to diffuse an escalating conflict. When one of the bishop's party mentioned arrest, we quickly put the notion to rest. We wanted only to end the conflict peacefully.

That SEPA representatives took off, rather than wait for peaceful resolution is a testimony that they were not certain of the legalities of their actions.

Today's version told by SEPA gossips leaves out the fact that the lawyer and locksmith were among the first to arrive. SEPA made that call. We should never have been put in this unfair position.

TRUTH

No one threatened the bishop with arrest.



LIE 2

Redeemer refused a million dollars (sometimes reported as \$2 million) to merge with another church.

We heard a second version of this lie that is so absurd it does not deserve an answer. **Redeemer was offered a million dollars if they'd accept black members.** Two thirds of our members were Tanzanian immigrants. We also had African American members. So if that offer was made—time to pay up!

Redeemer was never offered money by SEPA.

So how does such a bold lie gain footing? Here's our guess.

Redeemer had a covenant with Epiphany Lutheran Church. Epiphany was a mission congregation about two miles from Redeemer. Their building had been condemned. They were selling their land.

The goal of the covenant was to merge our congregations. Epiphany and Redeemer leaders agreed that this should be done slowly, as our communities were very different and the stakes were high if things should fail. The financial arrangement was simple. We paid for the building. Epiphany paid for the pastor. We never discussed Epiphany's assets becoming Redeemer's. Our eyes were on merging ministry not "getting Epiphany's money."

The covenant worked well for nearly two years.

It was broken suddenly by Epiphany—not Redeemer. This occurred shortly after the sale of Epiphany's property and after a private meeting including Epiphany's president, Pastor Timothy Muse, and the bishop. Redeemer had no knowledge that a meeting about our covenant was taking place.

Wouldn't you think that a bishop would encourage two congregations operating in covenant to discuss the breaking of a covenant?

Not when the proceeds from the sale of property are up for grabs.

The sale of the land had been a major project. We were happy for Epiphany. Pastor Muse met with us and pledged more of his time for Redeemer. He admitted being preoccupied with the land sale.

We started talking with Epiphany to speed up the merger process.

The last conversation we had with Epiphany ended when Redeemer found it necessary to explain that our African members are part of the congregation—not a separate entity. Epiphany said, with obvious confusion, that they were under the impression the Africans were separate.

For two years, Epiphany had been meeting with our integrated council, which included officers that were from our African membership.

Where did Epiphany get the idea that our African members were a separate voting entity?

Maybe from the bishop, whose appointed trustees reported to Synod Assembly that we had only 13 members — excluding our 60+ black members.

Bishop Burkat was already plotting to get our property when she was meeting with our covenant partners without our knowledge.

Constitutionally, a bishop needs certain conditions to exist to exercise authority over a congregation. One of them is a “scattered and diminished” membership.

The bishop, shortly after this, approached our African members and suggested they move their membership elsewhere.

She was trying to create a “scattered and diminished” membership to justify taking over our congregation. Our African members rejected this proposal.

We were informed of the breaking of the covenant by email. Pastor Muse would be gone in ten days. (The constitution calls for 30 days notice.) Epiphany intended to continue using our building as they worked through closure for another six months (rent free). This was arranged without consulting anyone at Redeemer!

Redeemer was not afforded the same courtesy when SEPA decided for us that we should close. We were locked out at the first opportunity.

Epiphany’s property sold for \$600,000 with SEPA claiming all but 5%, according to a bitter Epiphany member we encountered.

The covenant could have been part of an even more complicated scheme. That only one side of the covenant was party to the negotiations suggests this may have been the case.

Epiphany was a mission church. The property rules for mission churches give some property rights to the synod in exchange for financial assistance

in ministry. Redeemer was not a mission church and owned its property with no obligation to SEPA. There would have been serious questions had we completed the merger. Would Epiphany's mission status be imposed on Redeemer, and therefore cost us our property rights? Would SEPA risk losing access to Epiphany's money if the merger went forward? Was the covenant a plan to unite congregations to outnumber Redeemer members to attain a vote to close both churches with one vote—a Trojan horse covenant?

One other possible source of this rumor. SEPA Attorney John Gordon told the judge in court that as the first of six congregations SEPA planned to take over, we would have first dibs on mission development money. 1. Accepting that offer would cost us property rights. 2. The only place we heard about this offer was in court. No money was offered to us!

TRUTH

Redeemer was never offered money by SEPA to do anything.



LIE 3

Redeemer is racist.

When reason fails, go for emotions. Play the race card.

Racism is a serious accusation in today's world when the slightest racial comment can cost dearly. It should never be thrown around to achieve a personal or private agenda. Never without evidence.

We heard this lie from several people in the community who had looked at our property with interest in buying. Some were people of color. "They wouldn't have let you through the door," SEPA's sales agent said.

But the lie was not new.

In 1998 Rev. Robert Matthias visited our congregation and gave an impassioned speech. "Racism must stop." We asked him to cite one incident so that we could address his concern. He was dumbstruck. "Uh! They told me you are racist."

Eleven years later, a companion of one of the trustees entered our sanctuary on Mothers Day 2009. She gasped as she looked across the sanctuary and saw our diverse membership. *They told me you were racist—that you wouldn't baptize black babies.* (The language is cleaned up.)

NOTE: Our visits to 80 congregations reveal very little diversity within SEPA congregations. Most are more than 95% one color or another. There is little room for any SEPA congregation to be judging any other congregation on inclusion. The ELCA ranks next to last among all mainline religions and denominations in diversity. It is 96% white overall. Religious Landscape Study (2014) Pew Research Center

With this in mind, here is the history of racial integration at Redeemer.

East Falls was a predominantly white neighborhood until recent years. It was no more unusual that our congregation was primarily white than it is of most suburban churches today.

Our record of inclusion is notable.

The first black family joined Redeemer in the 1940s—the Elam family.

There were no headlines: First Black Family Joins White Church. This predated that kind of thinking!

We also had a pastor's family with Indian heritage in the 1950s or so.

Synod now has our archives, so I can't check the dates.

This was all before the turbulent 60s with racial unrest, the Civil Rights Movement and subsequent White Flight. **Redeemer dealt with the changes in society while staying put.**

The Wadlington Family joined Redeemer in the early 80s. The father served on council. Again, no fanfare.

One family joined before the formation of the LCA and another before the formation of the ELCA.

Through the 80s and 90s it was common to have a row of children from government housing projects sitting in the front of our church on Sunday morning. They were welcomed—popcorn crumbs and all! We also had an eight-week summer program that welcomed all children.

In our 25 years hosting a Ken-Crest early intervention center, Redeemer worked with the director and staff — many of whom were African-American.

Many of the children in the school were African American and most of the children at Redeemer attended that school (which closed when SEPA interfered with the lease we had just negotiated for another five years).

Our first Tanzanian members joined in 1998. Pastor Davis's three years as pastor (c. 2001) transformed our congregation into a mini-UN. We had new members from many ethnic backgrounds. **A family from North Philadelphia joined in 2000.** These members attracted other members. Many of these people played leadership roles in the church. Three served terms as president. Two served as treasurer.

From 1999 to 2008, we worked with five black pastors: Harvey Davis, Jesse Brown, John Parkinson, Festo Mutashobya and Ipyana Mwakabonga and several vicars. We asked to call Pastor Festo in 2007. SEPA met with him and he never set foot in our church again.

When SEPA made the most recent racist allegations—grasping at straws to justify their interference—Redeemer had 69 black members. All of them were locked out in 2009 and one of them was sued personally by SEPA. He was served court papers as we gathered to celebrate his attaining permanent residency status! Welcome to America!

SEPA's bishop, Claire Burkat, simply refused to recognize our black members, even after we met with her on November 1, 2007. At that meeting, Bishop Burkat asked how long each had been a member of Redeemer. She seemed to be intent on proving that our black members were recruited at the last minute to bolster Redeemer's position. Her jaw dropped when the first person she asked, one of our East African members, said 10 years, the second eight years, the third seven years. We proved to her that evening that we had steadily grown in membership and racial inclusion. But SEPA has a way of ignoring facts.

Here is our analysis of racism in the Redeemer saga.

- Racism is when you foster racist rumors with no corroborating evidence.
- Racism is when a bishop looks at a congregation's roster and comments— "A lot of these names look African."
- Racism is when you then totally ignore the majority membership of a church and report to Synod Assembly that a church has only 13 members (our total white membership). SEPA was given our congregational roster that included some 82 names in November 2007. Bishop Burkat reviewed it and asked for addresses after the meeting, which we provided. The report to synod was a bold and purposeful lie.
- Racism is when you say things like "White Redeemer must be allowed to die. Black Redeemer — we can put them anywhere." —Bishop Burkat, November 2007

- Racism is when you assume that Black people can't make decisions for themselves so you don't give them the right to vote on their property. 2008-2009
- Racism is when you further degrade people of a different color by suggesting that they should have chosen a different church to join and then direct them to a church where you've decided for them that they will "fit in." (This happened twice at Redeemer.) 1998 and 2008.
- Racism is when consultants are deployed to tell you the demographics of a neighborhood can no longer support a Lutheran congregation.

TRUTH

SEPA used racism to gain sympathy for selfish designs on our property.



LIE 4

The people of Redeemer stripped the church after the court order.

SEPA representatives testified to this in court with no evidence. The court asked for none and gave Redeemer no forum to counter the accusation.

But now the same person was telling SEPA's potential buyers the story. The fish story keeps growing.

The court order was issued at 5 pm on a Friday. SEPA, remembering to keep the Sabbath holy, changed the locks on Sunday morning.

Kim-Erik Williams, the archivist at the Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia, was surrounded by clutter as he told potential buyers about how we stole from our own church.

As archivist, he had overseen the removal of church records. Boxes of files were carried from the church. I personally saw someone, not from Redeemer, load four large boxes of church records into a car. I recorded the license plate number. In December, a team from SEPA spent a morning cleaning our church in preparation for reopening (they said), but they carried dishes and boxes of items to their cars. On another occasion, we saw

a man loading our folding chairs into a car. But SEPA tells people Redeemer stripped the church to its walls.

Nine months to the day AFTER SEPA sold Redeemer’s property, SEPA returned and took the chancel furnishings and everything of any value.

We know who stripped our church!

TRUTH

No one from Redeemer entered the church after the court order until it was sold in 2014.



LIE 5

Redeemer leaders showed no respect for the bishop.

This charge has never been made to our faces. We’ve heard this only recently and from multiple sources. A new fish story.

We had a two-hour meeting in November 2007 that the bishop started with name-calling. We are “adversarial” (repeated numerous times). All this, before we said word one. We responded with respect and were able to shift the tone of the meeting. It ended with the bishop making encouraging promises. She broke every one of them.

We were respectful when Bishop Burkat attempted to marginalize our black members in their presence. “White Redeemer must be allowed to die. Black Redeemer—we can put them anywhere.” We were shocked, but respectful.

Two of our African members gave a respectful presentation to Synod Assembly in 2009 and then Redeemer was attacked at the microphones, and by design, was not allowed to answer allegations. The host of witnesses against us included people unknown to us or with whom we had no contact in more than a decade.

We posted our correspondence with the bishop during the first year of the conflict. Read it for yourself. You will see that it was respectful. All our attempts to communicate were ignored.

2x2virtualchurch.com/links-to-documents-in-court-case/

2x2 has published political cartoons addressing our view of SEPA (and the church in general's) leadership. All of these were published since 2011, two years AFTER we were locked out of our church and after every other effort to communicate was exhausted. They are meant to show the difference between what church leaders say and do.

Redeemer leaders questioned authority with our constitutions and SEPA's Articles of Incorporation in our hands. The courts agreed that our arguments had merit. SEPA and the ELCA gave us no voice.

SEPA was the disrespectful party.

- The four trustees lied to us, failing to identify themselves as trustees for five months, laying a foundation of deceit.
- Though they claimed a need for Involuntary Synodical Administration, they never took steps to administer our church and failed to tell us we were under their administration for five months.
- The bishop refused to deal with our elected leaders, insisting on taking issues to the entire congregation. This is disrespectful to elected congregational leaders.
- Two trustees, Larry House and Tracey Beasley, attended worship and walked to the front of the sanctuary before the benediction and announced they were in charge, disrespecting our worship.
- Lying about us for years is disrespectful.
- Suing individual church members with NO attempt to negotiate beforehand is disrespectful.
- Refusing to acknowledge the need for reconciliation is disrespectful of the entire church's mission.

TRUTH

**This entire conflict was built upon
profound disrespect for the laity.**



LIE 6

Redeemer ran off every pastor/ Redeemer couldn't keep a pastor.

Let's go back as far as our current members' memory.

- **Pastor William Burglund** served Redeemer for seven years and retired.
- **Pastor William deHeyman** served Redeemer for eleven years and retired. There were some improprieties in his ministry, which Bishop Merkel addressed. Some damage was done. It might have been healthier for the congregation if Pastor deHeyman had left at this point. But he served five years after this and left on his own.
- **Pastor Robert Matthias** signed an 18-month term call with Redeemer. We looked forward to his presence and hoped that he could be instrumental in healing the damage of deHeyman's term. Bishop Almquist visited our council a few months later and asked for the term call to be broken. He had an assignment for Pastor Matthias in Bucks County. We used supply pastors for the next year. Pastor Matthias returned — within the time he would have been with us under his term call — to impose Involuntary Synodical Administration. He visited our bank with a former treasurer and transferred \$90,000 from our local bank account to Synod's account. It remains a mystery how that \$90,000 which had been in a Thrivent high-yield account had been transferred to the local bank, where we maintained a small working balance only. No signers for the Thrivent account were still active members.
- **Pastor Jesse Brown** served a one-year term call. At the end of the term call, Pastor Brown asked to cut his hours to a minimal 10 hours per week. SEPA asked us to regularize this call, which would have locked us into a pastor willing to commit to little more than Sunday morning responsibilities. We knew we needed more help than he was offering. We agreed to continue with a term-call on a month-to-month basis—and even to extending the call for one more year. SEPA attempted to force the issue by requiring repetitive votes—all of which failed—an intimidating and divisive exercise. Our offer to continue with a term call remained. Rev. Brown left on his own. *(NOTE: Why was this a deal-breaker issue? Pastor Brown's ordination papers were due to expire. He needed a regularized call to avoid review in reinstating his rostered status. A pastor's needs were put before the needs of the congregation. Bishop Almquist refused to assist in our search for a pastor. "Approve this call or there will be no pastor for a very long time.")*

- **Pastor Harvey Davis** served Redeemer for three years and retired on his own. He has recently been heard talking about his contentious relationship with us. Pastor Davis was popular! We are unaware of any contention. We would have been glad to have him stay as long as he liked. We consider this to be a breach in pastoral ethics. It amazes us that he would work to destroy a community he was called and paid to nurture. Pastor Davis has been uninvolved with our congregation for about 15 years. When he wanted to slow down as he approached his mid-70s, we tried to work with SEPA to find a replacement. SEPA was not helpful. We continued with supply pastors found through independent efforts of Pastor Davis and Redeemer leaders.
- **Pastor Timothy Muse** came to us as part of the covenant with Epiphany. He disappeared after a private meeting with Bishop Burkat. Pastor Muse was well regarded. We were not given an opportunity to talk with him about staying.
- Redeemer presented Bishop Burkat a resolution to call **Pastor Mutashobya**. He had worked with us for seven months as a member of our congregation. He was willing to commit to five years of service. He disappeared after a private meeting with the bishop's office. *This was the bishop's pivotal mistake. There was nothing to lose and everything to gain by approving our call to Pastor Mutashobya. But mission in East Falls was not the objective. Acquiring our land was the objective.*
- A supply pastor who was serving us in 2008 STILL worships regularly with Redeemer seven years later!

TRUTH

Redeemer ran off no pastors.

The bishop's office was instrumental in several pastors disappearing.
