

Redemption Members & Friends,

The elders of Redemption Gateway are incredibly grateful for the partnership we've shared with you over the past twelve years. We thank God for the incredible ministry that has been birthed and strengthened in and through Redemption Church.

The Redemption partnership has introduced us at Gateway to beautiful people and precious friendships. We have a bigger heart for and experience of diversity than we would have had without Redemption. We have a property that was invested in significantly from Redemption reserves and strengthened by Redemption's borrowing capacity.

We have benefited from numerous initiatives that were created through Redemption (especially the Surge Network, Missional Training Center, and AZ127) and we have delighted in supporting others (Immigrant Hope, AZ Reach, WeReconcile, and more). A major focus of Gateway's ministry this fall is the SeeJesus school, which was birthed out of a Redemption partnership with Paul Miller's SeeJesus Ministry. These partnerships and initiatives have been valuable and we intend to continue to invest in them.

All of this is to say that Gateway remains grateful for our shared history and work together as part of Redemption. Quite practically, most of us have drawers full of t-shirts with the Redemption "R" on them. We will continue to wear them with delight and joy, thankful for what God allowed us to experience together. Hundreds of Gateway people have deep family and friendship connections at other Redemption congregations, and we are delighted that these relationships will keep us in each other's orbits.

Over the years when our pastors and leaders would gather, Tyler Johnson would often make two statements that always resonated and are especially meaningful in this next season:

1. **"We aren't trying to lift up the name of Redemption, but the name of Jesus."** Our hearts resonated with this idea when we'd hear it, and we are striving to remember it now. While we rejoice that God allowed Redemption Church to make a difference in our state as one organizational entity, it's never been about us. This is a new opportunity for all of us to continue to lift up the one name that is above all other names.
2. **"Redemption exists for the congregations, not the congregations for Redemption."** In other words, the focus of the partnership has always been designed to help the local congregations thrive and the structure exists to serve the mission. For many years, that mission was best served by a multi-congregational, one-church structure. Now the mission is better served by a different structure, so we're all

changing the structure. We are confident that all of the local congregations will now thrive as local, autonomous churches.

In the near future, Redemption Gateway will become Ironwood Church. The ironwood tree is a “habitat modifying keystone species” in the Sonoran desert, which means that other plants around it thrive when it is healthy. It’s a slow growing tree with extremely strong wood (some sculptors lose their blades because it’s so hard). The big tree by our lobby entrance is an 80 year-old ironwood. We pray that, like the ironwood tree, we will continue to grow slowly and steadily into a strong local church that can be a blessing to our community and city.

The process of discernment that has taken place over recent months has reinvigorated our leadership with a renewed commitment and focus on the calling to make disciples, develop leaders, shepherd our local body, and plant churches in the southeast valley. While it has been a blessing to be able to participate in an organization with state and nation-wide influence, our leaders are eager to invest more deeply into our local community — one of the fastest growing areas in the nation.

We move into that season with gratitude and a sense of stewardship, eager to take all that we’ve experienced and learned from so many people, leaders, and congregations into an important new season of ministry.

We are praying for all of you, and hope you will pray for us.

All of life is all for Jesus,

Luke Simmons  
Lead Pastor  
Redemption Church Gateway