

# VOICES . . .

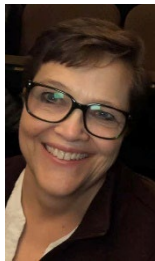
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## Redeemer Speaker Series

### Mortality as Medicine

Have you noticed when a special trip or experience is about to end, each step along the way seems to be more precious? Imagine taking that consciousness into every day. Once we accept that our time on earth is finite, we are more likely to engage what is truly important now. This is the “medicine of mortality.”

Please join us for the Wednesdays of Lent, for a simple supper at 6:00 p.m. (with advance sign-up), and at 7:00 as we learn from a dynamic line-up of speakers—a poet, a minister, a doctor, and more—each telling their meaningful story and inviting us to find more meaning in ours.



#### **March 12: Cynthia Terry**

##### ***Musings on Mortality with a Hospice Chaplain***

The Rev. Cynthia Terry has been a chaplain for all of her ordained career--30 years in higher education and currently with home hospice. Both settings have immersed her in grief, existential questions regarding life and death, as well as the joys and mundanity of life. Cynthia is ordained in the United Church of Christ, was raised in the Presbyterian Church (USA), and has attended various Episcopal churches with her wife and sons for many years.



#### **March 19: David Keplinger**

##### ***“Loving What is Mortal”: On Mary Oliver and the Poetry of the Willing Heart***

In this talk, Professor David Keplinger of American University will discuss his longtime friendship with Mary Oliver while looking into what she called “the spiritual purpose” of her poetry, which, in part, included the ways we might willingly subject our hearts to brokenness as we engage with the natural world. The talk will include selections from Oliver’s poetry, as well as selections from David’s recent book, “Ice.”

David Keplinger is Professor of Literature and Director of Creative Writing at American University in Washington, D.C. He is the author of eight collections of poetry and six volumes of literary translations from the Danish and the German, done in collaboration with authors from those languages. His work has won awards including The Colorado Book Award, The Rilke Prize, The Emily Dickinson Award, and his first book won The T.S. Eliot Award, selected by Mary Oliver.



#### **March 26: Eric De Jonge, M.D.**

##### ***From Gravely Ill to Dying- What Do We Know?***

- What do we understand about signs of imminent death and what remains mysterious?
- The medical and emotional journey for people who transition from gravely ill to dying.
- How does the experience differ when death occurs at home vs. in the hospital?

Eric De Jonge, M.D. serves as Director of Geriatrics and the Medical House Call Program at MedStar Washington Hospital Center. His main goal is to create skilled and compassionate teams that help underserved elders and their families live with dignity at home. He grew up in Chicago, Illinois, and

graduated with honors from both Stanford University and the Yale School of Medicine. He completed residency in primary care internal medicine at Johns Hopkins Bayview and did fellowships in Health Policy at Georgetown and in Geriatrics at Johns Hopkins. He is an Associate Professor at the Georgetown School of Medicine (full-time) and Assistant Professor at Johns Hopkins Medicine (part-time).



**April 2: Michelle Petties**

***Eating to Live or Eating to Die? A Food Addict's Reflection on Memento Mori***

Lent calls us to reflection, restraint, and renewal—yet in modern life, we often feast without thought, consuming what harms us as if it were a reward. In this conversation, Michelle Petties explores the paradox of our food system: how the things designed to sustain us have been engineered to shorten our lives. This session will challenge participants to confront the hidden costs of our modern food choices and equip them with the tools to eat with intention, awareness, and reverence for the fragile gift of life. Through storytelling and reflection and the lens of *Memento Mori*, we will examine how marketing, memory, and manufactured cravings trap us in cycles of consumption that erode both physical and spiritual well-being.

Michelle Petties is a TEDx speaker, Food Story coach, and author of the award-winning memoir *Leaving Large: The Stories of a Food Addict*. After years of excelling in media with brands like Radio One and Disney/ABC, Michelle struggled with emotional overeating and gained and lost over 700 pounds. She now conducts healing-through-reading-writing-and-storytelling workshops where she employs Prescriptive Writing and even poetry to teach individuals how to rewrite their emotional narratives around food, eating, hunger, and other behaviors.



**April 9: Amy Banks MD & Nancy Banks PHD**

***Into the Ether: Life, Death and the Illusion of Choice***

Kate Banks, renowned children's book author, "chose" to end her life by voluntary assisted death on February 24, 2024 after a two year odyssey with stage 4 neuroendocrine cancer. Kate hoped that her life experience could be used to help people talk about death, not only the grief of losing a loved one but also the inevitability we all share in leaving our physical bodies. She believed, at her core, that death was an extension of life, a transition that all living beings experience.

During Kate's battle with cancer, she began writing poetry seriously. As she described her creative process, she was literally channeling universal energies and wisdom onto the page. In stunning detail and profound prose, she wrote of pivotal moments in her own life that shaped her earthly mind and body. Her book of poetry, *Into the Ether*, published posthumously in October 2024, invites readers to consider that death is not the end but rather one point on a soul's ongoing growth journey. Join Kate's sisters, Amy Banks MD, psychiatrist, author, teacher and Nancy Banks PHD, historian and teacher, as they share the life, death and wisdom of Kate Banks, a prolific children's book author, energy healer, wife, mother, sister, daughter, aunt... and poet.