



photo credit: Kelly Ostergren

## Easter Season is Here!

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! How do you live in this celebratory light, especially while the shadows remain? The Easter season (a full 50 days!) is training ourselves for the joy that will be ours. It is not here yet in its fullness, but it will be here. How do you train yourself for joy? The table has been set by our King, and *you have been invited*. Enjoy the Feast.

Here are some of the ways our church staff celebrates the season:

**Kevin:** Cooking and eating good meals (smoked meats especially) and reading fun books such as: *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Sherlock Holmes*, *Father Brown*, *All Creatures Great & Small*. As long as it is not sin, saying yes as much as possible, remembering, "All the promises of God find their Yes in Jesus" (2 Corinthians 1:20a).

**Zoe:** Bringing back all the happy decor and colors into my house, including fresh cut flowers. But mostly, I'll be outside as much as possible, watching Spring unfold one glorious bud at a time. Every year nature displays a resurrection drama with perfect timing! Oh... and Reese's eggs... of course.

**Taylor:** Enjoying extravagant meals—nicer meats, more seasonings, paired with nice alcohol. Taking trips together as a family. Listening to celebratory music! And saying "Yes" as much as we can.

**Renee:** Celebrating with the children! They are masters at rejoicing. In the atrium, the children relive the Easter Vigil in the Liturgy of the Light. We explore the Last Supper, the City of Jerusalem, the parable of the Good Shepherd and the joy of the Empty Tomb! We are invited to join in with Isaiah's words to go up to the high mountain and lift up our voices to declare, "Here is your God" (Isaiah 40:9)" adding, "He is risen!"

**Daniel:** We try to allow God to speak to us in our pleasure and abundance, just as he speaks through our fasting and deprivation in Lent. We try to say "yes" to our children's requests (as we are able) and look for excuses for gratuitous celebration—after dinner ice cream runs, special presents, or purchasing the things we've wanted for months but have put off because we're trying to be responsible.

**Kelly:** Reading the *Jesus Storybook Bible* account of the Resurrection. This gives me yet another way of entering this story of fathomless Love that makes all things new and names us Beloved. Enjoying all kinds of delicious food with others—especially homemade bread and all things sweet! Preparing my garden and being outside as the earth wakes again after winter.

What are your ideas?

Rejoice now,  
heavenly hosts and choirs of angels,  
and let your trumpets shout Salvation  
for the victory of our mighty King.

Rejoice and sing now,  
all round earth,  
bright with a glorious splendor,  
for darkness has been vanquished  
by our eternal King.

Rejoice and be glad now,  
Mother Church,  
and let your holy courts, in radiant light,  
resound with the praises of your people

(from The Great Vigil of Easter, The Exultet).



## The Anglican Church in North America, Archbishop Foley Beach & His Upcoming Visit

by Ernie Didot

I used to play a lot of backyard football growing up. A bunch of guys (occasionally young ladies too) would find themselves designating the boundaries of shrubbery and driveways as end zones and sidelines. Then came the question of quarterback. It was generally easy enough to find someone with aspirations to be the next pro quarterbacks, like the Patrick Mahomes or Tom Brady of our day, but every now and then no one really stepped up. The game would sputter until someone was convinced that all they had to do was hand the ball off and toss a few screen passes, regardless of how pretty the spiral looked. The best backyard quarterbacks generally had a handful of plays to draw upon their palms in the huddle, even if they didn't have the physical skills to throw it far. Quarterbacks with good play calling made the game the most fun.

From those days of suburban grid-iron glory until now, in my middle-aged years, I have increasingly valued the role of good leadership—leaders that step up. Our church parish is a part of something bigger—a team if you will. Church of the Lamb is set under the leadership of Rector Kevin Whitfield, who is under the leadership of Bishop Steve Breedlove and soon to be Bishop Ordinary Alan Hawkins of the Diocese of Christ Our Hope. Our diocese is one of several dioceses spread across our continent (Mexico, U.S., and Canada) in a province called the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA). The leader of ACNA is a bishop chosen by the other bishops representing their diocese; for the past ten years that has been Archbishop Foley Beach. This structure is meant to provide leadership, shepherding, support, and accountability. Without good leadership, support, and accountability, teams can obviously flounder, drift, and lose their way and purpose. A quarterback-less football game is more of a directionless, rugby rumble.

It was, therefore, a great honor for me a few years ago to be asked to accompany our Archbishop Foley Beach for video production/communications purposes on weekend trips to parishes across North America and to see his leadership firsthand. I learned that it was a big deal to those parishes when he visited them. Having grown up as a “low church” Presbyterian, the robes, finery, and ceremony were all a new experience. I had to learn to call him, “Your Grace” or “Archbishop” at all times. I learned how he was asked to do all kinds of activities: preaching, baptizing, confirming, blessing newly constructed church buildings, blessing playgrounds, leading board meetings, responding to global events, participating in ecumenical events, and resolving conflicts.

*We gratefully  
anticipate a  
visit from  
Archbishop  
Foley Beach, a  
man our  
church prays  
for every  
Sunday, on  
April 28.*



In addition to his travels domestically in North America, he is seen as a leader in the global Anglican communion. In 2018, he was named the Chairman for the Global Anglican Futures Conference (GAFCON). These duties requires him to travel abroad even more as the Anglican global realignment gains momentum. The stamina he demonstrates in his constant travels would gain anyone a high degree of respect.

As I traveled with him, I learned that at heart, Archbishop Foley is a pastoral shepherd. He's an evangelist who would take time with anyone, including the cashier in a convenience store, to share the Good News. He is a man who cares personally for people and has actively demonstrated love and prayer for people in need. I have seen him walking a tightrope of diplomacy on any number of issues which require the skills of a 3-D chess player. And finally, and perhaps most importantly, I have seen him take leadership in moving our province firmly in the direction of orthodoxy in following Jesus and the Word of God.

Many people do not realize this, but when he was elected, he was Bishop of the Diocese of the South, and he must continue those responsibilities. As such, he will often visit parishes across the southern U.S.—it is a priority. But then, amidst his other travels abroad, he is pulled to other parishes and meetings throughout the Province. It has not been often that he has visited parishes within our Diocese of Christ Our Hope. As he comes to the end of his tenure this June at the Assembly where a new Archbishop will be chosen, it is a great privilege to have him visit our humble barn. It is with great joy that we get to welcome him, and thank him for his leadership, for stepping up in reaching North America with the transforming love of Jesus Christ.

Learn more about the ACNA and the Archbishop at [anglicanchurch.net/archbishop-beach/](http://anglicanchurch.net/archbishop-beach/)

# The Word of Life

by Leah Napotnik

*Word:* Repeat it out loud and it starts sounding funny, like a little tree frog. But what are words—sounds that communicate ideas and meaning, an avenue of communication, spoken or written or signed. We don't think about the definition of "word," because it's a given. We learn it through immersion from infancy. So how very interesting that Jesus is called the Word. Something this innately understood by us takes on a meaning that is deeper than the Mariana Trench. Mind-blowing. It makes my heart sing and my head hurt.

Realizing that I may give myself a migraine, I decided to give defining-Jesus-as-The-Word a try. (Insert a teeth-clenching emoji here.) John writes, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made thorough him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. He was in the world and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."*



*When not feasting on the Word of God, Leah might be found chasing lambs out of the garden, teaching her grandchildren science, or feeding Stephen (and whatever lucky guests have been invited to their massive dining table), not-so-dainty meals.*

Those few written words give us enough ponder fodder to last a lifetime. And we still won't grasp the immensity of it. The Word. THE creator of everything; THE meaning of life; THE communicator of meaning; THE true essence of all words and ideas and meanings. And then we must reconcile all the other titles the Word bears: Creator, Lord, Savior, Redeemer, Bread of Life, the Vine, Wonderful Counselor, King of Kings, the Way, the Truth & the Life . . . I could go on. The point is, the Word is also all these other things at the same time. In a much less grand way, I'm a daughter, wife, mother, grandmother, friend — different ideas and meanings, but titles for the same soul. (Which are you, Leah? Yes.) The Word is the One who gives meaning to these other titles, the One whose Spirit communicates these ideas to our souls. We digest what we can at each intersection. Sometimes it all makes me want to cry out, "Oh wretched brain that I have, who will deliver me from this finiteness?"

The Lord God Almighty is merciful and gracious to provide us with his Word in written form. How better to cut your teeth on The Word than through his written Word? The stories, the meanings and ideas of all those words, the vast treasure trove of riches. And what a bargain book! You can read the same words over and over for years, and suddenly The Word gives you new insight. It is to our detriment to neglect so great a book. The Word is life. His words are life at our very fingertips. We read, we ponder, we gather around his Word in small groups, we pray words from Scripture, we ingest The Word during Eucharist in the form of bread and wine. Jesus Christ—The Word. By the time this goes to print, Lent will be over, so I must say, Alleluia! Alleluia!

## Meet the Wileys

Grant and Carter Wiley began attending Lamb in the fall of 2023. After getting married last June, they stumbled upon Church of the Lamb through Abbey Coffee Roasters and were immediately captivated by its vision of a four-chapter gospel, emphasizing Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration. They are a part of the Maplehurst Parish Group and Grant recently joined the Land Team.

Both Grant and Carter grew up in the Valley and have now returned after a brief four-year stint in Newport News, Virginia, for college. They are currently renovating and will be moving into a farmhouse in Clover Hill, intending to be faithfully present to family and community in the Valley for the long run.

Grant studied philosophy in college and subsequently taught humanities at a classical Christian school. Presently, he is involved in training leaders within the classical education movement at the Society for Classical Learning. Carter pursued Social Work and recently began working with foster care and adoption services, assisting children and families in need of support and guidance throughout the process. They share a passion for reading, backpacking, hiking, and cycling, and they look forward to farming in some capacity in the near future. They have a miniature dachshund named Mabel.



# The Other Sacramentals

by Matt Light

We are familiar with the Sacrament of the **Eucharist**, which we celebrate every Sunday. We have also all experienced the joy that accompanies the Sacrament of **Baptism** (see Griffin's below). However, these are only two; the medieval Church celebrated seven Sacraments. What about the others? What other physical means does God use to bring us His grace?

The leaders of the English Reformation undertook the difficult task of reforming the Church and rooting out practices that were neither grounded in Scripture nor natural outgrowths of Scripture and Tradition. Christ directly practiced and instituted the Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist; the rest, not so much. For this reason, early Anglicans naturally viewed the other five medieval Sacraments more skeptically. As they meditated on these practices, however, they found that these other five Sacraments—the “Sacramentals” or the “Sacraments of the Church”—were in fact rooted in other Scriptural commands and in the Traditions of the Church.

About these Sacraments, *To Be a Christian: An Anglican Catechism* (the “Catechism”) states that “[t]hey were not ordained by Christ as necessary to salvation, but arose from the practices of the apostles and the Early Church, or were blessed by God in Scripture. God clearly uses them as means of grace” (Question 125, p.56). The *Book of Common Prayer* (2019), (the “BCP”) explains the “other” five Sacraments.

**Anointing of the Sick** (BCP, p.225): James 5:14–15a says: “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up.” This text suggests that the apostles had the practice of anointing with oil. This practice is preserved in the Sacrament; God promises to “save” the sick person, and to “raise him up”. This does

not mean that every sick person will be healed immediately; it does, however, remind us of God's promise to raise his children up and heal them in the Resurrection. God also offers us grace to persevere in our sicknesses. Although the medieval Catholic practice of “last rites” limited this Sacrament to people in immediate danger of death, the Anglican Sacrament is available more broadly to sick individuals.

**Confession** (BCP, p.223): James 5:16 says to “confess your sins to one another”. Although we should certainly confess our sins to the fellow-believers with whom we're close, there is something special about also confessing to a priest. After all, Christ expressly gave the leaders of the Church the authority to pronounce the forgiveness of sins (John 20:23). We understand that God, not the priest, does the forgiving. Still, hearing someone say to you, audibly, that you are forgiven is incredibly healing. This Sacrament is not necessary in order to be forgiven; as the old saying tells us about going to an Anglican priest for confession, “All may come; some should come; none must come.”

**Marriage** (BCP, p.201): The medieval Church called this “Holy Matrimony”; this term has survived into the BCP service. Modern American culture has tended towards the individualization and secularization of weddings; they often reflect the indulgent culture around us. From the very beginning, though, the Church has considered a wedding to be, first, a Church service. Like other Sacraments, it has an authorized form. God Himself presided at the very first wedding (Genesis 2:22). The Sacrament leads us into this grace together.

**Ordination** (BCP, p.472): The medievals called this Sacrament “Holy Orders”. “Ordination is the laying on of the bishop's hands with prayer, which confirms the gifts and calling of the candidates, consecrates them, and grants them authority to serve Christ and his Church in the office to which they have been called.” (Catechism Question 140, p.60). The individual is set apart for a particular ministry as a deacon, priest, or bishop, and receives God's grace to enable this work. The laying on of the bishop's hands, from generation to generation of bishops, forms an unbroken chain going all the way back to the apostles and through them, to Jesus himself.

**Confirmation** (BCP, p.175): Anglicans, like most Christians through history, baptize infants. What opportunity do baptized infants have to make the Faith their own? The answer is the Sacrament of Confirmation. The bishop lays his hands on the recipient. The recipient confirms the vows that his or her parents or godparents made at their baptism; they take on the commitments personally, and publicly proclaim their desire to live as a Christian. At this point, they are old enough to know what they're getting into. God renews and strengthens them for the work of a Christian; this is a type of ordination or “setting apart” for all Christians, not just those called to Holy Orders.



Griffin Brillhart, a JMU student, was baptized at Church of the Lamb on February 25. A candle lit from the paschal candle was given with the words, “Griffin, receive the light of our Lord Jesus Christ who said: ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’” Welcome the newly baptized!