



Bringing Back the Alleluia

Scott, my husband, loves Lent. Me, I'm usually more of an Easter girl. He prefers fall and winter, while I'm all about the spring and summer. But sometimes the church's liturgical calendar, while it seems to align magically with the moods of the seasons, doesn't always align with our hearts. The last couple of years as Lent came to a close, my heart was not ready to move on to celebration. I felt like I needed to sit in the quiet sadness of Holy Saturday a little longer. Not everything is made right yet. Heartache remains. I've missed the Vigil feast two years in a row (I know, I know... it was amazing) because I didn't think I could enter into the insane joy of it. My Easter heart was slow to awaken.

One thing I've noticed about nature though, these last couple of years especially, is that spring always comes after even the bleakest winter—every year so far. One week, the world is gray and brown, and the next thing I know, color is bursting forth everywhere. The glorious profusion will not be restrained by our lingering winter blues. Even in my continuing sorrows, the verdant vistas and the slow-motion unfurling of pinks and purples, whites and yellows, with their accompanying perfumes, textures, and shapes flood my brain with a manifested abundance of God's goodness. As I gaze mesmerized by the always surprising beauty of new birth and renewal, I again witness in some mysterious way the truths and promises we proclaim: "Christ is risen! He has overcome death!" Sitting in the Easter promise, something inside of my parched, cracked heart soil also stirs with life.

And then as I contemplate what those first fifty days after the resurrection must have been like for Jesus' disciples—those surprise visits by this strange new but also familiarly bodied Messiah, the giddy shock and utter bewilderment about what it all means—I wonder what I would have felt like in their shoes. Their astonished joy must have felt almost unbearable in its intensity. And yet as Jesus returned to the right hand of the Father in glory, they remained in a broken and dark world to continue the messy, seemingly inefficient kingdom work that Jesus had begun. Thank goodness for the promised Comforter! There was still a lot of pain and suffering ahead for those first witnesses. Those early disciples had expected a government overthrow that would solve their most pressing earthly sorrows. Instead, their paradigm was flipped upside down as they began to see for the first time what was really true and what really mattered. Perspective is everything.

The church calendar invites us to shift and explore perspectives that might not always feel instinctive at first. For me, as I surrender to the wonder of the Easter season, letting it wash over me anew, absorbing the renewing promise of it, a bloom of gratitude emerges from my lips to join the deafening chorus.

Embracing the Alleluia,

Zoe Hansen

Interim Director of Spiritual Formation

*Easter people, raise your voices,
sounds of heaven in earth should ring.
Christ has brought us heaven's choices;
Heavenly music, let it ring.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Easter people, let us sing.*

-William M. James

Becoming Easter People

- Spend time with the stories of Christ's Resurrection in the Gospels
- If possible, take a half-day or day as a prayer retreat with the Lord.
- Enjoy the world's reawakening in springtime—walk around the church property or take a hike in the forest. Listen. Watch.
- Feast with friends (or just go out for ice cream!)
- Say yes to children as much as possible.
- Share and listen to stories—what came alive for you over Lent, Holy Week, and Easter?

<https://churchrez.org/6-ways-to-celebrate-the-50-days-of-easter/>

A Perspective on a Gathering of Men

"Hey Walker, Gathering of Men is tonight."

"YESSSSS! (with a fist pump)" or "WOOHOO!" is the typical response of my 10 year old.

A classroom where one might learn about Georg Calixtus or John Newton is not really someplace that my son gets excited about going to. But when you throw in great food, great fellowship, ping pong, and cars on lifts, then it becomes the most anticipated event of the month for my son (and me.)

Unless you have lived in a cave for the last however many decades, you know that there is a vacuum of true male fellowship and celebration, not just within the church but everywhere. And most attempts to foster such qualities often feel forced or are feeble at best. Hey, men's ministry leaders, enough with the annual corn hole tournament. Not that those are bad, but come on, you can do better.

The Gathering of Men has found the sweet spot. I mean, what man doesn't like learning about history? Especially when the subject matter is important men who have gone before us and laid a foundation of faith that we get to build on today. God created in men a need to feel useful and to live a life of significance. I am thankful that the Gathering of Men exists so that my son can be surrounded by men that recognize and celebrate those qualities.

So, CHEERS! to the men that have gone before us, and CHEERS! to the Gathering of Men.

Respectfully,

Mark Lee (an Anglican)

Mark Lee and his wife Anna have two kids who attend Redeemer Classical School. He has office space above the Elkton Brewing Company and is friends with many in our church. If you were at Easter Vigil, you may have tasted the moose that he shot in Canada!

Next Gathering: May 7, 5:30 pm
Dan Velker's house
3217 River Rd, Elkton
contact dan@vacab.com

Topic: St. Patrick

*Men of all ages are welcome;
Feel free to bring friends and family
from outside of Lamb.*



Introducing new member: *Angela Zheng*



Join us for a graduation party!

Open Table, Monday, May 8, 6:30 pm

*Didot's house: 845 College Ave, Harrisonburg
Bring your favorite "American" side potluck dish
(ie potato salad, apple pie...you get the idea)*

I am an accounting major at Eastern Mennonite University. The time went by fast! I am graduating in May.

I started attending Church of the Lamb in July, 2022, when I met Ernie Didot through a summer internship. He came up and talked to me first and invited me to attend his church. I praise the Lord that He brought the Didots and this church community which made me feel at home. I decided to become a member of Lamb right away. God used the Didots as a bridge for me to come to Church of the Lamb, which I really appreciate.

I am moving to Charlottesville after graduation since God prepared a job for me there. Thanks to Daniel Zimmerman's help, I found an apartment and roommate in a short period of time. God always provides me with the best in the different stages of life.

I originally come from China and have been an International student here since 2019.

My parents are coming from China to attend my commencement ceremony on May 7th. It will be a significant milestone. My dad is a senior pastor of two major Anglican churches in Anqing, Anhui Province, China, and my mom is an elementary school English teacher. They have been spending a lifetime glorifying the Lord and working hard for the mission given by Him. Words cannot describe their incredible life. God always remembers people who love Him and sacrifice themselves to Him. Jesus told his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me". My parents have been following Jesus' teaching their whole lives.

My dad says when he gets older and looks back, he expects to say that I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. I am looking forward to the life path and mission given to me by the Lord, and spending a lifetime serving him and helping people.

Abbey News

Spring greetings from the Abbey! So much is happening on the property.

We worshipped for the first time in the barn this Easter after repurposing the structure into a social gathering and worship space. After the Easter Vigil, we feasted into the night with music, bonfires, and overnight camping. On Easter morning there was a sprawling breakfast and an even more sprawling Easter egg hunt. Simon Hayes was the first person to be baptized in the barn. Our joy and festivity were commensurate with the occasion.

We had no way of knowing at the time, but the barn's availability as a worship space will serve us through the summer as Redeemer renovates its space. We'll start worshipping full-time at the barn beginning at Pentecost. I'm grateful for those who have worked many hours with much sweat to make the space clean, safe, pleasant, and beautiful.

We're not done with the barn either! Be on the lookout for more improvements soon. We're working on heating and cooling the space to tolerable levels, installing better lighting, fixing roof leaks, adding a patio out front, and improving our restroom facilities.



One last thing: we're going to have a poll soon for you to help us name them! We'll announce that soon.



I'm also pleased to announce that the trees we planted in the orchard are thriving, and all of them were sponsored through your generosity! Additionally, during the Spring Workday, we planted over 500 willow, sycamore, and cottonwood saplings along our section of Cub Run. These saplings were cut from trees on our own property, and they will anchor the stream banks to prevent erosion, filter the water more effectively, and repair the areas that have been trodden down. You also may have noticed the terraced flowerbeds we're building on the hillside. We hope to begin growing flowers to use in worship and catechesis, to have periodic flower sales to support our ventures here, and simply to make our home more beautiful. We've also contracted with a local farmer to plant sunflowers on the old crop field this summer: they should bloom in early August. Come and take photos when they do!

Lastly, we've acquired two Maremma puppies that will, when they are grown, guard our livestock against predators like coyotes and foxes. They're quite adorable, but they actually are essential for us to take the next step in raising animals on the property. Right now, the dogs are growing and training at the Bausermans' farm with their experienced dog, and when they're ready, we'll move them to the pasture.

Easter blessings to you all,

Daniel Zimmerman

Director, Abide Project

CGS Highlights



Our newest member: Simon Hayes



Digging up the "Alleluia"



Proudly bringing it back to worship



Youth gathering in the barn

An Open Table Celebration



It's not too often that different churches get to have fellowship with one another, but this week was an exception. On Monday evening, Ernie and Katrina Didot hosted an ecumenical worship service at their home, which brought together the members of several local churches for an evening of singing and prayer. The worship leaders curated a list of favorite songs from each church, interspersed with a few scripture readings and prayers, in typical Anglican fashion.

Members from the Church of the Lamb, Church of the Incarnation, Ray of Hope, Mosaic of Grace, and the Early Church joined along with guitars, drums, and a violinist to offer their worship to God. At one point, everyone was invited to break into groups to pray with one another, which was a good opportunity to meet people from the other churches. Throughout the evening, people spread out blankets across the backyard, shared snacks, watched the children running around, and gathered around the fire pit, enjoying the Didots' hospitality.

This was just the latest of many instances of the Didots opening their home to the community. Usually on Monday nights when there isn't an ecumenical worship service happening, the Didots host a community dinner that they call Open Table. Anyone is welcome to attend, no matter their background, temperament, age, or other such qualifier. While the roster of attendees changes from week to week, those who do attend can always count on an excellent dinner, interesting conversation, and ambient jazz playing from a speaker I have yet to locate.

While the food is always good, I've come to appreciate the community aspect of the Open Table dinners most of all. I graduated college and moved to a new town at the onset of the pandemic, and as a result, I soon found myself completely alone most of the time, with few opportunities to connect with other people. Fortunately, that hasn't been the case since moving back to Harrisonburg, and the Open Table dinners are a large part of that. I enjoy getting to spend time with people and hearing their stories. It often reminds me of a verse in Tagore's Gitanjali: "Thou hast made me known to friends whom I knew not. Thou hast given me seats in homes not my own. Thou hast brought the distant near and made a brother of the stranger."

David Martin

David is an architect with Blue Line, loves creating linguistic tree maps, and can sometimes be found playing bass guitar with the worship team on a Sunday morning.

A couple of upcoming things for the women . . .

Blue Ridge Deanery
Women's Retreat
 "REST IN ME"
 SEPTEMBER 29, 6:45PM - OCTOBER 1, 12:00PM
 SPEAKER: SALLY BREEDLOVE

You are invited to join women from churches across the Blue Ridge Deanery at The Roslyn Retreat Center in Richmond, VA for a weekend of worship and fellowship.

Register at:
<https://incarnation.regfox.com/deanery-womens>

Prices include room & meals for Saturday and breakfast Sunday morning
 \$230 Double Room
 \$275 Single Room
 Prices go up after June 15th

SAVE THE DATE
 (details coming)

**Women's
 Dessert and Fellowship**
 June 7, 7-9pm