



A Time for Re-remembering

by Kevin Whitfield, Rector

My memory does strange things. Failure impresses itself more strongly than success. I think this is common. Perhaps it is why one of God's most frequent commands is "remember". He knows we tend to misremember.

"Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you" (Deuteronomy 15:15).

"Remember the Lord your God, for he is the one who gives the ability to get wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:18).

This is a time of year when we ask you to remember. We ask you to reflect on God's presence and provision in the past year, personally and as a body of Christ. We will gather as a family for an Annual Party on October 8. This is partly just to be together, to have fun and delight in one another, but it is also to remember and to celebrate His faithfulness.

I am remembering God's faithfulness to Lamb in a specific way. In June 2021, we embarked on an ambitious, three year goal for our small, young family to raise \$750,000 to finalize the purchase of our property and begin projects here. Two years and three months later, we have exceeded and outpaced our goal. To date we have raised \$830,000.

Thank you and thanks be to our Lord. Thank you for stepping out in faith with us. I pray God has blessed you and will bless you in the sacrifice you made to participate. We see the fruit of these sacrifices all around us,

especially as we worship in the barn on Sundays.

Please join us at our Annual Party on October 8, and please invite others to see what God is doing at Lamb. This is also a time when we anticipate God's faithfulness in the days ahead. As a church family, we recommit to a sacrificial way of life together. We commit to sacrifice our time and resources to be part of God's people here. We commit to serve Christ and one another before ourselves. Ironically, this way of sacrifice is what gives our lives purpose and meaning. During an epidemic of loneliness, the Church must become a place of sacrificial belonging.

Sacrificial belonging is what the Apostle Paul meant when he described membership in the body of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 12). Membership is not a bureaucratic formality. It is an abiding commitment to behave as a family through the power of God's Spirit. It is offering up yourself and the gifts God has given you in service to Him and to others. Being a member is "what one does. Who one is." (from Eric Miller, *Reign of Love: The Fiction* of Wendell Berry)

For us to be the family of God at Lamb, we need you! Will you take time to remember God's presence in the past and prayerfully anticipate his coming faithfulness? Will you commit to be part of our family in the year ahead? I hope you will.

Peace of Christ,

Kevin

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PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR

ANNUAL PARTY

OCTOBER 8 FROM 4 P.M.

APPLE CIDER PRESSING
 CHICKEN WINGS | FACE PAINTING
 DESSERT CONTEST | KETTLE CORN
 PLASTICO THUO RACE | LAWN GAMES

WWW.CHURCHOFTHELAMB.ORG/THE-ABBEY/BLOG/ANNUAL-PARTY-2023
 362 INDIAN TRAIL ROAD, PENN LAIRD, VA

The Gift of the Song

by Taylor Fletcher, Director of Musical Worship

For the past fifteen years, I've been involved with church musical worship— some years on staff, some years as a ministry team leader, and some as a volunteer. I've been playing music for far longer, starting on the violin at the age of four.

Whether I'm playing as an amateur or professional, using the guitar or mandolin, worshiping in a holy place or gigging at a bar, making music has always been an act of worship, the main source of joy in my life, and something that correctly postures me before my Creator. It is the way I turn towards God, yearning for the Spirit's breath each morning when I wake up and finding Christ's peace at the end of each day.

And while this pattern may be somewhat unique to me, I do believe that musical worship is one of the most intimate ways that we get to experience God. Not only the words we sing, but also the very mechanics of worship mean that as we sing, God's breath fills our lungs and we use that breath to pour out our praise to Him— from Him and through Him and to Him, to paraphrase Romans 11:36. As God breathed life into creation in Genesis 1, worshiping him, breathing in His breath and singing out our praise affirms that we are continually made new and refreshed by His Spirit.

In this way, worship is something that continues to permeate from eternity to eternity. From the very beginning, there has been musical worship. I'm reminded of the creation of Narnia as C.S. Lewis describes in *The Magician's Nephew*:

"In the darkness something was happening at last. A voice had begun to sing . . . the most beautiful noise he had ever heard. It was so beautiful he could hardly bear it . . . Then two wonders happened at

the same moment. One was that the voice was suddenly joined by other voices; more voices than you could possibly count. They were in harmony with it, but far higher up the scale: cold, tingling, silvery voices. The second wonder was that the blackness overhead, all at once, was blazing with stars . . . If you had seen it and heard it, you would have felt quite certain that it was the stars themselves which were singing, and that it was the First Voice, the deep one, which had made them appear and made them sing . . ."

Lewis's interpretation of a creation moment helps me think about the creation of our own world. Even Adam's first words in celebration of God's creation, Eve, were a song (Gen. 2:23). The Israelites worshiped as God brought them out of Egypt, through the Red Sea (Exodus 15). David sang to the Lord constantly, and Paul directed the church in Ephesus to "Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19).

My vision for worship at Church of the Lamb is that we lift up our voices together to the Lord, continuing the song that will be sung from everlasting to everlasting. As it has done for generations, I pray that the words we sing and the act of praise will shape our posture toward Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This means that worship will be at times joyful, at times solemn, and often a mix of both, as we experience and affirm the fullness of the triune God.

I am honored to be on staff with the Church of the Lamb and look forward to what God has planned for this community of believers. Thank you all for worshipping with me!

Taylor



photo credit: Ernie Didot

Taylor spent most of his life in Midlothian, Virginia with a brief stint in Harrisonburg while attending James Madison University and receiving his Bachelors of Music in Music Education. After graduation, Taylor and his wife, Rachel, married and moved back to Midlothian where he taught secondary school orchestra and guitar for six years. He spent most of those years as the part-time Worship Director at Spring Run Presbyterian Church. Last spring, Rachel and Taylor followed the Lord's lead back to Harrisonburg where they quickly fell into community with Church of the Lamb. Taylor daylights as a project manager on a cyber security team for Ally Bank. Taylor and Rachel have three children: Addie, Abel, and Theo.

They enjoy spending time together, making and eating good food, working on DIY projects, and playing some of the dozens of instruments littering their home.

Membership Has Its Benefits

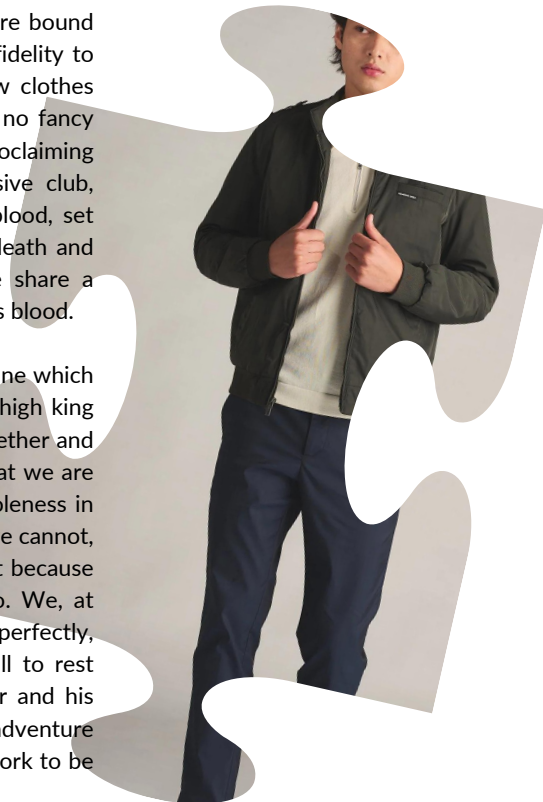
by Scott Hansen

I was a child of the 80's and my middle and high school years spanned the decade. I still remember the Christmas I received my Members Only jacket, the stylish light gray coat, with the epaulets on the shoulders and button neck and of course the Members Only label stitched beneath the front left breast pocket. Because of this new jacket, proclaiming my "in" status, I would finally be cool and accepted by my peers. Entry into the upper echelons, the high society of Montevideo Middle School was guaranteed. I would be one of the "in" crowd, except for the fact that the Members Only jacket frenzy died about a year or two before I acquired mine. My entry into the social elite of middle school was a perfect failure, those doors forever closed to me.

The membership to a society that I would like to speak about has a far more significant impact and much higher price of admission than a mere article of clothing. I am talking about the Church, and not just any church but our particular limb of the body, Church of the Lamb. Thankfully Jesus completed the hardest work. He defeated death

and sin, and links our lives to his. We are bound by our shared allegiance, our common fidelity to King Jesus, and all of us wear the new clothes that he has provided for us. There are no fancy labels beneath our left breast pockets proclaiming membership into a nonexistent, exclusive club, but we are all of us marked with his blood, set apart, and our membership in his life, death and resurrection is renewed each time we share a meal together, the Meal, his body and his blood.

This is a society I want to be a part of, one which seeks to become image bearers of the high king Jesus, to be made into a family, knit together and finely woven, one in which we know that we are all broken but find our healing and wholeness in him who heals and bears it all because we cannot, one that bears each other's burdens not because we have to but because we choose to. We, at Church of the Lamb, faithfully and imperfectly, seek to abide in Christ, heeding his call to rest and obeying his call to love each other and his world. I am excited to continue on this adventure with you. There's room for us all and work to be done.



Annual Party 2022



A Cozy Place for Women to Gather

by Lavonne Martin



Women's ministry. Where do I begin to count all the ways I love it?! My involvement in women's ministries has spanned decades in both participatory and leadership roles. Women have been some of my closest allies emotionally and spiritually during all the stages of my life and I can't imagine how different life would have been without their love, support and prayers.

Since joining Church of the Lamb 3½ years ago, I have longed to see a women's group form that offers support and encouragement in our journeys. I am thrilled to see that coming to fruition in what we are calling "T3" gatherings. The three T's stands for Tea, Talks, and Testimonies.

Why talks and testimonies? First of all, it seems clear that talking with each other and being heard are typically top love languages for women. We discovered during the pandemic just how important face to face socializing is to our well-being. Therefore, the first half of our monthly gathering time includes informal conversation over hot drinks and light brunch style refreshments. During the second half of our time, a pre-arranged volunteer shares her life story with the group. As we learn about the significant factors which have shaped her, we learn more deeply who she is, how God has been present to her, and how we can support her in her continuing journey.

Last month, the Bellwether contained an excellent article by Katrina Didot about how we all belong to each other. She encouraged us to courageously reach out and help each other when we struggle with life traumas, negative narratives that we believe about ourselves, and stresses that isolate and discourage us. It is my hope that as we learn to know one another better through these gatherings, we will even more naturally and intentionally know how to serve one another in love. I pray that our neighbors and friends will be drawn in as well.

This fall, we will meet at my home (240 Claremont Ave.) on the second Saturdays of each month from 9-11 a.m. Women of all walks of life are invited to join in. The wonderful blending of the age groups brings a sweet richness. So, please come as you are and enjoy sweet fellowship with our "Ladies of the Lamb".

Why be a volunteer at Church of the Lamb?

"One of my favorite ways to serve at Lamb is helping with the little ones in the nursery. My daughter and I help watch these dear ones up to about 20 months old. They are so precious. They surprise me each week with how they're growing and learning, even at a young age. I remember the days when my children were very young. I'm thankful that I can now serve and help parents to be able to sit in the service and just have a moment to breathe and rest."

"I volunteer because it is wonderful to work with others in the body to make our land beautiful, our fellowship rich, and our children loved."

"Why do I keep signing up as host/co-leader of home group? Several reasons: I love being with our people each week; it ensures I'll study more than I might otherwise; and practically speaking, we have a big house and I know if people are coming, I'll clean it weekly."

"There is no greater privilege than to serve The Almighty God of the Universe ... so great of privilege that one would surely want to give their very best."