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SEEING ONE ANOTHER ALWAYS ANEW

“And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”

BY PETER VANDERVEEN

The Easter season is usually ushered in with great fanfare. It’s the expectation we all share in one manner or another. If Easter is what we proclaim it to be, how could it not be attended? How could it be possible to be somehow otherwise occupied if, indeed, death is no longer the one certain finality of life? So it is assumed that churches will be crowded, and extra musicians will be hired, and the hymns will be boisterous and familiar. And with an unusual enthusiasm the story of Jesus’ resurrection and emergence from out of death and the grave will be read. It’s news that should, by right, burst forth.

This is the story we celebrate and remember with the genuine hope that it will sparkle with newness, and so will we, and so will the day.

We have wrapped this day in the mythic garb that it requires an Herculean effort. For afterward, among those who work within the church, most of the talk turns to how exhausting the demands of Holy Week are, and how exhausted we must be. Exhausted. I find this fascinating. Why is it that we don’t say, instead, that we are exhilarated? Sports figures who win climactic championships never turn in the rush of victory to face the cameras and explain how tired they are or how much they simply want to escape from the sport for a while — or that they want to take a nap. They party, deep into the night. They expect the celebration to continue at length, with parades and recognitions and the construction of monuments to their accomplishments.

Easter’s momentum doesn’t last very long. Perhaps following suit and falling under the sway of the same expressions of exhaustion, the Sunday after Easter has come to be known as Low Sunday. We expect that all the excitement of the previous week has taken its toll. It has been completely spent, and church members with it. So attendance is light. It’s a recovery Sunday, before we head back into the usual routine of services again. The hoped for newness seems gone.

The most revelatory moment of God’s victory in Jesus’ resurrection, however, is expressed not in the surprise of Easter morning, but in the intimate ways that Jesus returned and encountered his disciples. Jesus appeared to them, while they, in fear, had locked themselves away. He appeared. There’s no quieter way to enter a room. The mode of his arriving makes any imagined vision of confrontation impossible.

Jesus was simply with his friends. And it was then that he did one beautifully intimate thing: he breathed on them. Jo Ann Jones preached beautifully about this to the smaller congregation that gathered on the Sunday after Easter. Nothing could have been softer or more wonderfully palpable and human. Breath is life, apart from which we are inert lumps of formed earth. And Jesus gave his breath and life to his disciples. That’s the heart of Easter. Jesus’ words of peace and forgiveness didn’t announce anything. They merely confirmed what had already been given and received: love made incarnate in a way more gentle than even a whisper. Breath.

In all our Easter exuberance, the most important moment is often lost. And the legacy of this is deeply unfortunate. For the church speaks far more of being saved than of being at peace.

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The Redeemer Annual Garden Party at Church of the Redeemer

*Welcome spring with delicious delicacies, libations and song
on the grounds of our own beautiful campus.*

Return your RSVP card or
Purchase your tickets NOW online
at:
TheRedeemer.org/RSVP
In 2019, this event sold-out!

Please join us for this
joyous all-parish event
that helps to support
our music program
Sunday, May 15th
from 4:00 - 7:00 pm

Church of the Redeemer
230 Pennswood Road
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

FORMATION

The Beauty of Worshipping Alongside Children
Ministries with Children

BY TORY DUNKLE

I am admittedly coming off an Easter high, but there are few things as sweet in this world as the sound of little ones breaking through the hum of a full congregation. I know what you are thinking. Seriously? I enjoy the sound of constant fidgeting, inopportune bathroom breaks and loud chatter? I'd be lying if I said this all helps me to focus on worship. But in the midst of all these distracting sounds are those that remind me why we all gather together as a community of believers.

The challenge of worship is to put aside the distractions of the world and enter into God's presence as a communal body. As grown-ups, we are prone to assume that children should be included as one of those distractions to be quiet during worship. Their chatter and wiggles are just one more thing



that prevents us from fully focusing on worship. If only they would be still and quiet, we could finally experience the fullness of the liturgy.

By relegating children to statues in the pew, we fail to recognize and celebrate their status as members of the body of Christ and limit their ability to fully participate in the life of the church.

To include and welcome children in worship is to acknowledge them as members of the kingdom of God. Let us remember Matthew 19:13-14. While the disciples tried to keep the children away from him, Jesus welcomed them with open arms and proclaimed to the crowd their place in the kingdom. By virtue of their baptism, children are received as full

members of the body of Christ and are invited to fully participate in the life of the church.

Worship is one of the few truly intergenerational spaces left where children and adults are invited not only to interact, but more importantly to enter into God's presence as fellow believers. It is through regular inclusion and participation in liturgy that our children learn how to live and love as fellow members of God's body here on earth.

So yes, there is nothing sweeter than the sound of preschoolers stumbling through the Lord's Prayer, friends holding hands in the pews and siblings skipping as they come forward to receive communion. If we wade through all the distractions, we catch a glimpse of the beauty of the future church forming right before our eyes. And that deserves a loud "Amen" from toddlers and grown-ups alike!

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SEEING ONE ANOTHER, *continued from the front page*

Our own words are tinged with threat, rather than embrace; and so much of this talk amounts only to wasted breath.

We live in a world where gossip, prejudice and resentment can mushroom instantaneously. Hatred can go viral in a flash. A few words explode into shouts of anger and fury.

But love doesn't work this way. It can't be relayed as an abstract passion which, like rage, obliterates everything in its path. Love is stubbornly local. It can be conveyed only in embodied proximity, person to person—as close as breathing. This is its glory. It can't be experienced or engaged from a safe distance. Love requires and invites us to the humbleness of feeling someone breathe on us in peace. After two full years of pandemic, during which no activity was as risky as being together and breathing together, this is a daunting thought. But this is

what opens us to true holiness.

Throughout the country communities are experiencing an alarming spike in violent crime. This is often attributed to the pandemic. We have been able to carry on in many ways, through necessary and, sometimes, relished isolation. Our technologies have helped us immensely in the work of meeting our material needs. But peace rarely comes through distanced negotiations. It begins, with us too, when we become aware of the marvel and beauty of our breath.

The beauty of the church can't be adequately understood by reviewing its programs and initiatives. Its true heart is made visible in the way that its members continually reenact Jesus' Easter moment with his friends, in their choosing to be close enough to others, even strangers, to breath on them and

with them. People who might otherwise have no reason to encounter one another are invited to connect with the hope and expectation of peace. Attending makes possible the grace of appearing. And appearing grants us the exhilaration of seeing one another always anew.



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Trish Bennett, Copy Editor pro bono
Current and back issues available at:
www.TheRedeemer.org/voice

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Deadline for the June issue: May 18

FORMATION

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! – *Death and New Life*

Adult Forum Series Continues through May 22, 10:45am, Masterman Hall

May 1, Jo Ann Jones



Pastoral Care and Last Rites

The Book of Common Prayer encourages families to notify clergy when a person is near death so that

the “ministrations of the Church may be provided.” This is a series of prayers in which family and friends may participate, and also a time when clergy stand beside the sick. We assist our members in staring down the seeming emptiness of death until the truth emerges, that love is as strong as death. Join us this morning as Jo Ann leads us in a discussion of the Church’s response to pastoral concerns that arise during end-of-life care.

May 8, Rodger McKinney & Peter Vanderveen



Funerals and Burials in the Church

Rodger is the Owner/Supervisor of Chadwick & McKinney Funeral Home and has been a parishioner of The Redeemer for decades.

Together, he and Peter have conducted countless funeral arrangements and burials at The Redeemer and have walked with families through their own journeys of grief, mourning, remembrance, and celebration. Join us this morning as Rodger and Peter open for us the ways in which funerals and burials are prepared, how we might choose to be remembered, how we might remember our loved ones.

May 15, Joseph Kelly



Death and Grief

Joseph Kelly has served as the Director of Programs at Peter’s Place, Radnor, PA since 2018. Since 2001 Peter’s Place has sought to provide

safe and supportive environments to grieving children and families and to act as a community resource to foster understanding of the effects of death and grief. Joseph interned at Peter’s Place, and was later hired as the first Outreach Coordinator, from 2007-2008. He then spent 10 years working as a mental health therapist at Valley Forge Military Academy and College. Joseph is also employed at Club La Maison, where he is a certified personal trainer. It is here where he runs a small private practice working with teens and young adults, combining exercise and talk

therapy. Joseph earned his bachelor’s degree in psychology and master’s degree in clinical psychology from West Chester University and is licensed in Pennsylvania as a professional counselor.

May 22, Peter Vanderveen



The Body as a Location of Holiness or Desecration

In this final week of our series Peter will address the ways in which we as a people might locate holiness

or desecration in the human body. The ways in which we treat the bodies of the dead speak powerfully of the way in which we treat the bodies of the living. How might our rituals around death and dying allow us to live more fully in the present, and more consciously of the divine? Join us this morning as Peter leads us in an exploration of holiness as it might be found in the human body.

I’m Sorry

By MICHAEL PALMISANO

Have you noticed something missing in your life recently? If so, perhaps it is because the Confession of Sin has been absent from our worship for the past couple of weeks! Our tradition is permissive—even encouraging—about our omitting the Confession of Sin during the season of Eastertide. It’s the only time of year in which we might even consider holding such a practice. The logic goes something like this: Our sins have been so entirely covered by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead on Easter morning that we ought to maintain this posture of righteousness before God the Father as we rejoice rather than repent. Or at least, this sounds like a pretty good theological justification for our behavior. But, are we really doing ourselves any favors by omitting the Confession during Eastertide? Better yet, have we even noticed its absence?

If we would have anything worthwhile to say about the absence of Confession—moreover, of Absolution—we would first need to consider what they accomplish for us. How does Confession differ from our other apologies? How does Absolution differ from our neighbors’ forgiveness? In my mind, the practice of Confession to God and neighbor is itself an act of praise. It is only before God that we can be certain that our confession will be met with forgiveness. No



other relationship—no human relationship—can offer that same promise. In this way, Absolution is the only response God can offer to our repentance. No human person can provide us with the consolation of God’s absolution. Although Absolution is mediated by a human priest, it is God’s initiative which accomplishes it. Absolution is no mere forgiveness; it is a new beginning: a person remade as if on the first day of Creation.

Confession to God and neighbor is really a startlingly foreign practice to our day-to-day life, and yet it is something we do every week when we gather at The Redeemer. Think about it: Where else in your life do you give voice to your guilt and shame in a public forum? Where else do you so regularly go in seeking forgiveness? If these things weren’t just typical “church things” to do, then perhaps we would actually spend some time thinking about them and how they transform us.

Our weekly remembrance of Confession is no mere act of repentance and self-flagellation, it is the opportunity to acknowledge who we truly are—imperfect, yet in the process of becoming—and to be completely “seen” by God. Only God alone can see us for who we are, accept us as we are, and rejoice in who we are. Perhaps, as an act of celebration throughout Eastertide we might even consider keeping up with our confessions.

Why the Colors?

By JO ANN JONES

After the Palm Sunday service, a member of The Redeemer congregation asked why the vestments and altar hangings were red. This question prompted a sense that perhaps there was a need to explain the significance of the liturgical colors used during the Church year. They are meant to call attention to the particular theme of each season and to lend some dynamism to the worship of the Church in each liturgical season.

The Church began using liturgical colors during late antiquity and the early Middle Ages. It may have been as late as the Twelfth Century that certain colors became associated with certain liturgical seasons and feast or fast days. The earliest colors mentioned included

white, purple and olive green. In addition, the designation for these colors varied also; for example, a chasuble of the “color of clotted blood” (probably reddish purple) is mentioned at the turn of the Ninth Century.

Pope Innocent III accounted for four Roman liturgical colors at the end of the Twelfth Century: white, red, black and green. Violet might also be used in lieu of black on certain occasions such as Advent and Lent. After the Council of Trent, held between 1545 and 1563, the Roman Catholic Church

standardized the liturgical colors for use in that Church: white for festive occasions, marking pivotal events in the life of Christ, such as Christmas and its season, and Easter and its season; purple or violet for more penitential seasons, including Lent. For years, purple was the liturgical color also used for Advent. Recently, blue has come into greater use. Both



are acceptable. Red is the color used for the feast days of martyrs, the Holy Spirit/ Pentecost, or other occasions such as ordinations. Green is used for the Sundays after the Feasts of the Epiphany and Pentecost, or what we call “Ordinary Time.” (As an aside, some Protestant denominations call the Sundays after Pentecost “Kingdom Building Time.”) The color rose may still be used on two

Sundays: Gaudete Sunday in Advent and Laetare Sunday in Lent. This color signifies a lightening of the penitential mood of these seasons and points ahead to the joyful feasts of Christmas and Easter.

To recap: We mark the seasons in this way at The Redeemer: beginning in Advent, the liturgical colors are: Advent—purple; Christmas—white; Epiphany—green; Lent—purple; Easter—white; Pentecost—red; Sundays after Pentecost—green.

PROGRAM

REPORT FROM SABBATICAL



BY MICHAEL DIORIO

How wonderful it is to be back in The Redeemer community after three months of sabbatical. At the end of January I was, naturally, excited to go away, but by the end of April I was anticipating my return to put in to practice all that I had learned.

While my original plan was to split the sabbatical time between both France and England, the first portion of my time away in France was so fruitful that I decided not to travel to England, as that would have been more of an observational experience for me: unique, but observational nonetheless. I returned to Paris to study with my improvisation teacher, Vincent Warnier, who kindly agreed to take me on for an additional seven lessons (even through Holy Week!).

A mild bout of COVID did take a few days away from me, but we more than made up for the lost time. My time with Vincent was nothing short of transformational. His kind demeanor, passionate teaching style and superior musicianship never failed to inspire me. After each lesson I would invariably go back to practicing for a few hours so that I didn't forget all that I learned, or all that he showed me.



Though Vincent took the Grand-Prix in the formidable Chartres Organ Competition, and is the successor to the Duruflé musical legacy at the church of Saint Etienne du Mont. He is also the organ professor at the renowned Ecole Normale in Paris. His modesty and joy in sharing all that he knows always outshines his formidable accomplishments.

What did I learn from this time? Well, to be sure, the pinball in my mind is still ricocheting through all the experiences I've had over the past three months. For now I can at least say, without hyperbole, that I have never experienced such incredible teaching, or have been as inspired in my life as I have by this experience, by the people I've met, and by the awakened expansion of musical expression.

For now I think the most important thing is to express my gratitude to this parish for granting me the time away and for the incredible work that Katy Hutchings, Hope Knight and visiting organist Paul Fleckenstein all brought to the choir program in my absence. Everyone worked so beautifully together toward the benefit of our liturgies and the overall expression of worship for which The Redeemer is known and loved.

GREEN ACRES IS THE PLACE TO BE

PARISH BUSINESS

BY JAY EINSPANIER

Yes, I know that this is the first line of the classic TV show of the same name, and not associated with Church of the Redeemer: but, it did get your attention. (Also, please ignore the gentleman in tennis whites cutting through the picture. He also has absolutely nothing to do with this article!)

Our purpose is to explore how we will keep "Green Acres" green for the years to come.

Plan A might be prayer, although we have noticed that even prayer for rain is at times delayed.

As a result we have decided to implement Plan B: an in-ground irrigation system.

Last year we used a system around the Parish House that consisted of drip hoses and hand watering. You probably noticed the hoses stretching across the parking lot. The hand watering was undertaken by both Paulo and me. It was fun. We got wet during the hot days both deliberately and by accident. Either way, it was enjoyable. However,



the system did waste water and a better system will better aid both the plants and grass.

Installation of the new system began in late April and we are hoping to have everything in place in time for the Garden Party in May. You will still see

a few hoses in the parking lot since we could not run the system to the far reaches of the blacktop. Once our landscape in the parking lot is better established, those hoses will disappear. So, we will be in good shape to keep the green things green.



SAVE THE DATE

Sunday June 5
Pentecost

**Spring Picnic
on the
Parish House
Courtyard**

