

FELLOWSHIP

NEWCOMER PROFILE

PEOPLE MAKING THE REDEEMER THEIR FAITH COMMUNITY



This month, Jessica Harper and Christopher Zafiriou.

Thank you very much for sharing your story with us about your entry into The Redeemer community.

How long have you been attending services here?

Our first service was during advent 2013.

Are you life-long Episcopalians? If so, what other Episcopal churches have you attended?

I was raised an Episcopalian, attended an unusual Episcopal-Catholic school growing up, and we were married in the Episcopal Church. Chris was not raised in a church but his mother played the organ at an Episcopal church.

What is your previous church experience?

We had been attending Gladwyne Presbyterian Church since 2007.

How did you find The Redeemer?

Tim Leithead is one of our neighbors, and at every block party or neighborhood gathering he talked up the children's program at his church and encouraged us to visit. I knew The Redeemer from when I had attended a couple times when I was a Bryn Mawr undergraduate, but I hadn't been since. My husband found Kate Brown's information online as the "mom's group" head, and she generously answered all my questions in emails and eventually over coffee.

What inspired you to attend?

The robust children's program and the music. Our kindergarten boys, Nicholas and Marshall, tried out the cherub choir, and I was so impressed with Katy Hutchings. Chris and I both feel a strong musical education is important and are thankful that the church happens to provide this. The childcare is also great; our three year old daughter loves Miss

Pat, and was happy to separate from us, which had never happened before. The Catechesis I being Montessori was attractive, since our boys attend Bala House Montessori. Another big draw was the intellectual vibe of the community. My philosophy-loving husband was delighted to hear John Rawls mentioned in a sermon.

What would you want to tell others about The Redeemer to encourage them to come and explore our parish?

I tell people how much I love the Cherub Choir, or how many kids are in the Sunday School program or about the interesting lectures in the adult education hour. Also it's been lovely how welcoming people have been.

Tell us a bit about yourself outside of The Redeemer—your jobs, your family, your hobbies.

Chris and I first met when I was at Bryn Mawr and he was at Haverford, and we returned to the area after grad school. Chris works for Glenmede Trust Company and serves as an investment officer/ portfolio manager for the Pew Charitable Trusts. I am a fine art photographer and make pictures about the family. A book of my photographs, called *The Home Stage*, is being published this fall; it's about the stage in life when you are anchored to the home as well as the fact that the home is the stage on which your children first learn how to live. Our 6-year-old boys, Nicholas and Marshall enjoy kindergarten, cherub choir, and woodworking with Daddy. Our 3-year-old daughter Catherine likes to ride her bicycle. As summer begins, all three are taking pleasure in moving around a lot of dirt and water (sometimes we call it gardening).

INTIMATIONS OF THE ETERNAL

AMBLE AND ROAM, OBSERVE, BECOME ATTUNED

BY PETER VANDERVEEN

My wife Trish and I are members of Longwood Gardens. She is drawn to the horticulture. I am an enthusiastic member because the gardens are a perfect alternative to the heat and sun of the shore.

For both of us, a visit there is wonderfully refreshing. Like most, we simply show up and walk through the turnstiles. We don't need an excuse or a particular program as reason to go. Simply strolling the landscape offers so much for the senses.

I feel time when I'm there. The great gnarled trees stand as a testament to years of enduring. Their continuity—being in the same place, holding to the same shape, keeping to the same seasonal rhythms—reminds me of all that has come and gone: styles and fads and periods of life and cultural movements and political fashions and generations that died away decades before, who saw these same trees. Blossoms are followed by fruit; the clear water of the ponds grows dimmer with algae; the burst of fragrance in the morning is softer and more serene in the evening.

I feel more like a creature when I'm there. I become more aware of all the physical interactions that make us who we are and ground us to the earth. I notice and appreciate common elements: the soil under foot, the warmth of the sun, the function of the breeze, the need for water. The gardens provide a correction to the more narrow perception of myself that is my usual habit, dwelling in the issues of the moment, removed from the broader communion of the body with material nature. I never walk away without being subtly reenergized.

The church is meant to be a garden

too. And, in like manner, we shouldn't require specific programs or scheduled offerings as an excuse to visit. It should be in our minds less an institution, like a school, and more a park, a place to wander—if not physically, then at least spiritually.

There are no entrance fees or gift shops, but the church itself provides a space for remarkable discovery and revelation. Everything here is an expression of time: a testament of the hopes and aspirations, the struggles and the prayers, of countless peoples across many cultures. The building gives witness to the cost of war and the victory of peace, the dreams of human beings and the passion of God. If you were to spend even an hour strolling, literally or figuratively, you would feel time, not just in its passing but, even more, in its promise.

The church gives witness to the soul, to that mysterious vitality that is our breath and our word and all that gives us intimations of the eternal. We tend to forget this dimensionality to our lives; we're more entangled in the issues of the moment, removed from the deeper communion of God with us and our participation in a covenant that will blossom into the reign of God's kingdom. But in ways great and small, all throughout the building, we are given reminders of what is most true and will endure forever. It's hard to walk away from the church, having recognized this, without feeling refreshed and buoyant.

Somehow, across the years, we've lost this sense of the church as garden. Some time, across the span of the summer months, however, I encourage you to come to The Redeemer as if it were a park. Amble and roam, observe, become attuned. You'll be grateful for the experience.

JUNE PARISH PICNIC

GREAT FOOD AND TONS OF FUN AND FELLOWSHIP



Sunday, June 15, was our first day on the summer schedule and we celebrated a wonderful season by honoring our Church School and Youth leaders and our choirs. Spirit-raising spirituals filled our 10am worship and the annual spring picnic was standing room only. We even made it on ABC6 news.