



May 2019

What's Happening In May?

Church Events:

Grovers Dinner – May 27th
Ronni's Restaurant in Madison
6:00 PM – sign up in the annex

Youth Events:

Kayaking – May 18th

Busy Beginnings!

Well, May is now begun and we have been busy here at the church! Some of it has been fun and encouraging; the baby shower for Macey and Clint Reid and the Youth Auction. Some of it has been sad; David Price's funeral service. In either case, though, it has been amazing to see the Kallam Grove family spring into action. Thank you all for your support of one another. On one level you are supporting the church, but on a deeper level you are helping one another and this is the work we have been given by Jesus our Lord. Remember our sermon from last year on Romans 12? Paul says, "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship", but then goes on to explain how each person in the church is given gifts to be used in service of the others. To give of our time and resources to build each other up in Christ's body *is* our holy and acceptable sacrifice to God. I know it has been a busy season, but hang in there. Whether you know it or not you are doing the work Jesus calls us to do – to "rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep (also Rom. 12)". As we head towards the summer let's not slack off, but continue the good work we've started.

P.S. I want to extend a special thank you to everyone for this year's Youth Auction. I know all the members of the Youth Committee are busy and stretched thin, yet y'all gave everyone a fun night. Thank you for getting out the letters months ago, getting the food, and putting together a fun party. A very special thank you also to Andrew Malick for being our auctioneer. Even without amplification you kept the bids coming and got us out before midnight! Finally, I want to say thank you to everyone who came out and donated to our youth. I understand that our auction has changed since it was first conceived.

When it began, and even in my first couple of years here, it was something akin to a white elephant party at Christmas. There were plenty of good items, but it was also a way to “bless” other people with the junk you had laying around the house and get a good laugh in at the same time. It was understood that the point was not so much the items up for auction as the support of the youth group. It is a little more serious than it used to be, but the interest in supporting our youth has not changed. Thank you.



Eastertide

Easter was so much fun this year! I always find that my enjoyment of Easter is directly related to the time I took to be intentional about Lent and this year I think we did Lent well at Kallam Grove. I am grateful to everyone who came out for our Bible study. I enjoyed our discussions and even more, if y’all know it or not, you were an amazing accountability group for me. It is easy to make Lenten resolutions and equally easy to break them. Our weekly meeting helped keep me focused and serious about the season. I also enjoyed Holy Week this year. Thank you again and again to all the people who helped me pull off our Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunrise services. Y’all brought food, helped me do set up, decorated, and put in extra hours. I think it all worked and it all made Easter that much better. Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!



Lent was a time of sober reflection. The goal of Lent is to prepare ourselves to receive God’s gift of Easter. Sometimes that means confronting our own sin, which isolates us from God, and confessing it to repair the relationship. Sometimes it means allowing ourselves to feel long buried hopes and desires. Sometimes it means learning want (both not having and desiring to have). Needless to say, Lent is hard. It is hard to be serious and reflective that long! The good news is, Lent is over! And now it is time for something different.

After Jesus’ resurrection, Luke tells us that he appeared to his friends over a period of 40 days. Then, when they were all gathered together, he ascended into heaven while they were talking. 10 days after that the disciples received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost and the church was born. This period of time between Easter and Pentecost is called Eastertide. It is not a time of seriousness and sober reflection; it is a time to celebrate!

Hear the good news – Jesus is risen from the dead! God gave him a new resurrection body that is no longer subject to death. The old promises of a redeemed creation for the righteous are true and Jesus is proof. More than that, this Jesus who loved us enough to give his life for us is now made king and judge of the universe. Talk about friends in high places!!! Who can condemn us? Only Jesus has that right and he loves us to the point of death. Because of Easter we are more than conquerors.

There is a very real understanding in the New Testament that the end of time has already begun. When we look at Jesus and what happened to him Easter morning, we are looking at a fast forward of what God is going to do for all faithful believers. Now that we know the end of the story it has some powerful implications for the way we live our lives. What all the New Testament comes to is this: there is no longer any excuse for not living according to God’s law, summed up in this, “love the LORD your God with all your heart and soul and mind and love your neighbor as yourself.”

That last one is tricky. Think about politics. What would it really mean to practice, “do unto others as you would have them do unto you?” We are having a hard time with that right now. The motto seems to be, “defend my rights to the pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness and your well being be damned if it gets in my way.” We live and die by a politics of entitlement. I understand that mentality, because no one is going to fight for me. The price we pay to live lives pleasing to God is enormous. Before Easter there was no guarantee that we would be okay if we willingly laid aside the pursuit of our lives for others. But now there is a hope. There is nothing that can keep us from the power of God – not even death. And if we give our lives in love to him and our neighbors then we have everlasting life to look forward to. Not as disembodied souls either; in a real world with real bodies and real purpose – we shall, “build houses and live in them, plant vineyards and eat their fruit. We will not build houses for others to live in them or plant vineyards for others to take their fruit. Our days will be long and we shall long enjoy the work of our hands. Our labor will not be in vain and our children will not be born for calamity (from Isaiah 65).”

We have seen the future and the future is good. Let us put our shoulders to the plough and set ourselves to the work before us. It will not always be easy, but the reward is literally the world. Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!

Looking Ahead

Save the Date: June 22nd – Kallam Grove VBS. We still need volunteers. You can sign up on the bulletin board outside the fellowship hall.

SEC Opportunities: As y’all know I just got back from the Southeast Conference Annual Meeting, which was held in Silverhill, AL. We have a new superintendent and I am excited for all the initiatives she has started. One of them is a focus on learning and collaboration between churches. The SEC is sponsoring three learning cohorts this year. One will focus on financial accountability, one on church vitality, and one on justice issues. We were given a sneak peak at the curriculums at the annual meeting. The cohorts will be taught by one or more people from the denomination. Churches will need to sign up to participate. After the initial training the churches will try to collaborate to find ways to implement the material. It is a pick and choose, so there is no commitment to do all of them. This is for lay people and pastors, so if anyone would be interested in learning more about money in the church, continuing

vitality, or justice issues, please check out the website, <http://southeastconf.org/cohorts>, and please come talk the pastor!

Sign-up for Grovers Dinners and Donut fellowship!: We got off to a slow start this year, but we need to pick it back up! Two of our best opportunities for regular fellowship are Grovers Dinners and the Coffee and Donut Fellowship. We need people to sign-up! For Grovers you just name the restaurant, day, and time. In some cases you may need to give the restaurant a heads up with a headcount, but most of the places we go are pretty informal. And even though it's called Coffee and Donut Fellowship, there are no hard rules about what to serve – you can do classic donuts or any other breakfast snack you like. Sign-ups are in the annex.

Pentecost and a new bible study : Pentecost is coming soon and we will celebrate here at Kallam Grove. Pentecost is the birthday of the Church as we remember the arrival of the Holy Spirit. We are aiming to resume our Bible Study after Pentecost, probably with a study on the Acts of the Apostle's. If you have any more requests, please send them to the pastor. Keep your ears to the ground for our start date.