

THE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER OF ROSEDALE BIBLE COLLEGE

SUMMER 2025

# MIRROR



*Beauty*  
will save the world



# The beauty of the GOSPEL

by Reuben Sairs & Jewel Showalter

**T**he Bible is filled with the words “beauty and beautiful,” but if we don’t know Hebrew and Greek, and read from a wide variety of translations, we’re unaware of their prevalence.

In the Old Testament, the writer of Ecclesiastes says, “He has made everything beautiful in its time.” (3:11) Women, men, temples, clothing, and the good life are all described as beautiful. There is even the “impractical” beauty of the tabernacle and temple. Picture the elaborately ornamented priestly robes. Smell the fragrant incense with its inimitable recipe. Hear the music of the lute and the lyre.

God gifted Bezalel, a skilled artisan and architect, to lead in the creation of a multi-sensory worship space for Himself. Beauty matters to God.

In the New Testament we don’t find the literal words “beauty and beautiful” used very often. The Greek word commonly used for beauty—*kalos*—also means good, perfect, precious, free from defect.

Isn’t it beautiful to find beauty in what is good—as well as finding good in what is beautiful? Consider the descriptions of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21 and 22. The perfection of heaven—the culmination to this age—is filled with holy beauty.

The words from Psalm 96:9 and 1 Chronicles 16:29, “Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness” blend words like glory, splendor and beauty. It’s hard to isolate these concepts from one another.

But what exactly is beauty? It resists tight definitions and cannot really be captured in words. You can’t put beauty under a microscope. Describing it isn’t experiencing it. You can’t capture it in a public opinion poll. You might stick to your opinion about beauty even if the world doesn’t agree. We can measure our pulse when we experience beauty, but beauty is certainly more than our heart rate.

We have to experience beauty, and only afterwards try to intimate what it was we actually encountered. What is it we felt, saw, heard, or understood? What does beauty do to us?

There is beauty in music, art, sports, bodies, behavior, nature, character, math, and so on. But all those beauties seem to hint that there is one big thing that they are all a part of and point to. We call that BEAUTY. All beautiful things have it. When we experience it, it affects us in multiple and surprising ways.

Many dimensions of life are improved by enhancing their beauty. Witness a mural splashed on the sides of an inner-city apartment block, flowering window boxes dressing up a dull street. Conversely, the degraded and run-down aspects of life lack beauty.

Whether we find it in the garage or in the garden, in the ear, the eye, or under our fingers, we want beauty, and we will try to surround ourselves with it. We will find it or create it and then try to live in it. We like it. It pleases us.

But sin distorts and twists beauty. The Eden fruit was “pleasing to the eye,” but it quickly faded. When we truly have “the mind of Christ” and our natures are redeemed, what pleases us will always be beautiful.

Philosophers have developed different ideas about beauty, and of course, they rarely agree. Academic discussions of beauty often include the word aesthetics. But such philosophizing rarely influences our daily quest for beauty.

What clothes did you put on today, and why? Why did you paint the living room yellow? Why do you wear your hair that way? Why do you like that song and want to tell me about it? Why did I try to imitate somebody else’s style?

**“Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.”**

Some things are commonly appreciated. Consider a rainbow. Picture walking with a friend, and about 15 minutes into the walk, your friend says, “Hey, did you see that rainbow?” He or she hadn’t called attention to it at the time.

Wouldn’t you give them an earful? “Why didn’t you say something at the time? Why did you let me miss it?” We want others to share beauty with us. We naturally call attention to beauty. Put a few people in front of something thought of as beautiful. They



will discuss it, even argue about it, and then in many cases modify their appraisal. They're reaching for something intangible.

We say, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder," but in fact we'll spend a lot of energy trying to bend the perceptions and experience of other beholders. "I thought it was an ugly house, but now that you pointed out the way it looks from across the street, I guess it isn't as ugly as I thought." Or it could go the other way, "Oh, I didn't notice that. That really is a hideous shirt."

All of that process hints that beauty is something in and of itself. Maybe beauty isn't entirely a matter of individual taste? Otherwise, why would we discuss it, argue about it, seek to persuade? We are reaching for something with a hope that when it is found, we will agree and enjoy it more together.

We can never really solve what it is that makes something beautiful. Beauty corresponds to something deep inside our minds—conscious or subconscious. It elevates us and wants to tell us about ourselves. What we find beautiful is part of our personality.

It might be a good idea to ask couples to have discussions about beauty. It might make for better parenting if we tried to figure out what our adolescents find beautiful. It might make each of us much more appreciative of others if we listened to learn what others find beautiful.

Most of us will admit that we grow in our appreciation of beautiful things. We might even be embarrassed to be reminded of our former tastes. Appreciation of beauty is something we can cultivate and nurture. We groan inside if we see that nurture of beauty neglected because of difficult circumstances.

As Christians we believe that God is the source of all beauty. He is the ultimate perfection of beauty. All things beautiful descend from the perfection of

beauty found in Him. Psalm 50:2 proclaims, "From Zion, perfect in beauty, God shines forth."

Questions for those of us in church leadership: have we neglected beauty in our worship services? Have we neglected beauty in our proclamation of the gospel? Should we strive to make worship beautiful by the highest standards we can get? Would the appeal to the beauty of Jesus Christ be a foundational part of the call of the evangelist?

When the light of Christ came into my life in my teenage years, I can only describe it as an experience of absolute, irresistible beauty. I wouldn't have put it in those terms at the time, but looking back now, I understand that I was filled with a longing ache to get to the source of all that is beautiful and to be a part of it.


Isaiah 52:7 captures the beauty of salvation and has become especially important to me.

*How beautiful on the mountains  
are the feet of those who bring good news,  
who proclaim peace,  
who bring good tidings,  
who proclaim salvation,  
who say to Zion,  
"Your God reigns!"*



**Reuben Sairs**


*Reuben Sairs has served as a beloved teacher and librarian at RBC since 2002. He is also an associate pastor at London Christian Fellowship. Reuben and his wife Vicki have three adult sons.*

A photograph of a Virginia Bluebell plant with several small, light blue, bell-shaped flowers hanging from a green stem. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue.

*Virginia Bluebells*  
by Annette Hertzler ('78)

O' gathered bells  
of heaven's blue  
Ringing and Singing  
"He loves me, too!"

As far in the Wood  
As my eye can see.  
They're ringing and singing  
His love for me!

A photograph of a Virginia Bluebell plant with several small, light blue, bell-shaped flowers hanging from a green stem. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue.



# EVERYDAY

## beauty

by Justin Burkholder ('22-'23)



### NATURE

I wasn't exactly lost, but I had become separated from my two traveling companions in the Hundred Mile Wilderness of northern Maine. We'd been hiking the Appalachian Trail for several days, and that morning, soon after we set off, I lost sight of them. I started to worry and picked up speed, hoping to overtake them. As the afternoon wore into evening, exhaustion set in, and I had to admit defeat. I was feeling anxious as I prepared to sleep alone by a quiet lake when I heard a sorrowful laugh curling through the twilight.

It was a loon. I tried to mimic it, laughing like a madman. The loon grew curious and began swimming toward me. It swam so close I could see its glowing red eyes. The loon's calls evolved as the dusk deepened; mournful wails gave way to surreal tremolos, then softened into soothing tones that seemed to cradle me in calm. I was able to relax and sleep. I eventually found my hiking companions, but the solace offered by this wild creature lingered with me.

### PEOPLE AND ANIMALS

When I was a teenager, I knew an elderly Amish man who had a crippled hen he couldn't bear to butcher. It had become his pet. Every morning at 7 o'clock, he'd step outside to carefully lift the hen off the ground allowing her to lay her egg. One morning, he asked me to drive him to an appointment in a neighboring town. When I arrived, I found him outside, coaxing his hen to lay her egg by tenderly massaging her sides with his hands. Forever frozen in my memory is the image of the frail old man stooping over his wounded hen, an unusual but lovely partnership.

### ART

At the Art Institute of Chicago, I came upon a sea of chaotic dots. When I stepped back, the scene unfolded. There they were, elegant women with parasols, men in crisp suits, children, dogs, boats, even a monkey. *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte* was less a painting and more a puzzle, each tiny dot snapping into place to create something alive.

Years later, when I moved to Columbus, Ohio, I wandered into that very painting. The Topiary Park had transformed the artist Seurat's dots into living sculptures. Bushes became men, women, and children. A tree was shaped into a boat. Altogether there were 54 topiary figures replicated from the original painting. I loved that anyone could meander through an artist's three-dimensional recreation of a two-dimensional painting of a suburb in Paris, right here in downtown Columbus.



[Seurat, George. A Sunday on La Grande Jatte. 1884, Art Institute of Chicago.](#)



## MUSIC

I was seven years old when I watched a group of Bahamian and Haitian children sing the song “Father Abraham.” I was mesmerized. Growing up as a Mennonite child, accustomed to singing hymns and the occasional subdued nursery rhyme, I had never encountered such charisma and vibrant energy in song. The children made dynamic motions with their hands and arms. They swayed and danced. To end the song, they didn’t just stop singing or sing “amen” the way I was used to doing. Instead, they shouted “shut up.” I had never thought of ending a song this way. I wondered what my dad would say if I sang “shut up” instead of “amen” when we finished singing the Doxology in church.



**Justin Burkholder**

*Justin ('22-'23) is currently working towards a degree in English Education at Ohio State University. He and his wife Rachel ('18-'19) live in Columbus, Ohio, and attend Columbus Network of Microchurches.*



## FOOD

Not long after I settled into the village of Subi Khali, Bangladesh, my new Hindu friend Bakash invited me to his home for a meal prepared by his mother and sister. Inside their simple house, I was instructed to sit cross-legged on a floor mat with Bakash while his mother and sister served us, following the custom of waiting to eat until we finished. Their smiles suggested they were eager to see an American try their cooking. Fragrant rice, goat curry, and sliced cucumbers were set before us. When no utensils appeared, I realized I’d be eating with my hands. I watched Bakash mix rice and curry with his fingers, placing it expertly into his mouth. I tried it too. The rice and curry that reached my mouth tasted delicious but much of it fell down over my shirt and onto my lap.

Bakash’s mother and sister ducked their smiles into their saris. Just as I began to get the hang of it, I seized a cucumber firmly, but it slipped from my fingers and flew forward, striking Bakash’s mother on the cheek as she leaned down to serve me more rice. This time, their laughter escaped, loud and hiccupping as they struggled to compose themselves. I looked down at the kernels of rice scattered over my clothes, then up at my new friends. It felt right. They enjoyed my clumsiness while I savored their food.

## The Terrarium

by Annette Hertzler ('78)

*I made some little glass globe terrarium ornaments,  
and on the way to church, a little poem came to me.*

I made these little  
worlds of life—  
These worlds were made by me.  
I put in soil, and plants,  
and stones,  
And hung them on my tree.

How hard it’d be to comprehend  
if someone said to me,  
“These worlds weren’t  
made by you at all—  
These worlds just  
came to be.”





# RBC NEWS & NOTES

## Introducing Lifetime Associates

Have you included RBC in your estate planning? Thanks for letting us know if you have, and we'll make you Lifetime Associates. (Associates are friends of RBC who make a faith promise to support RBC with \$1,000 annually.) Lifetime Associates remember RBC in their future giving but join the Associates team immediately. Benefits include an invitation to the fall banquet and free tickets for the fall drama as well as bimonthly updates via the *Associates Newsletter*. Contact director of development, Aaron Miller, [aaronmiller@rosedale.edu](mailto:aaronmiller@rosedale.edu), and learn more about how your investments can serve the Kingdom now and for generations to come.



"We included Rosedale Bible College in our will because its influence runs deep in both our family and the broader community. We love seeing the many ways that RBC alumni strengthen churches and communities—preaching, teaching, serving, building. I, Laban, attended in 1977. RBC shaped my young spirit and steadied my academic footing. Although I, Mary Ann, am not an alum, RBC and its related network are deeply woven into the fabric of our lives. Our son was first a Rosedale Choral Camper, then later a student. Many of our nieces and nephews as well as other young adult acquaintances have attended. But RBC is so much more than just a college. It's a mission and community worth sustaining. It provides essential support for so much Kingdom work. Remove RBC and something critical collapses."

—Laban ('77) and Mary Ann Miller

## Women's Dorm Update

This month the sprinkler system is being installed. Air conditioning and heating units are being placed. Plumbing and electrical work continue. Outdoor and indoor wall finishing is progressing. Enlarged parking lots, sidewalks, and outdoor lighting posts are being set. Check the livestream at [rosedale.edu](https://rosedale.edu) to watch progress on the dorm.



## Tiny House Live Auction

Rosedale Trades students and instructors have been hard at work building a Tiny House which is scheduled for a 30-day online auction beginning July 1, 2025. The cozy 10'x30' mini home has a combined living, dining, and full kitchen with range and microwave, utility room, full bath, and bedroom. Built on a trailer for portability, Tiny Homes are popular as summer homes, Air B&B units, and for elder care.



## 2025 Graduation

We held our 59th annual commencement ceremony to celebrate 35 graduates on May 25. This was the largest graduating class in school history since we've begun conferring associate degrees. Please pray for the graduates as they leave RBC and adjust to new settings, careers, and relationships.

## New Director for Rosedale Trades



Andrew "Drew" Beitzel ('11-'12), son of founder Titus Beitzel ('84), will be taking over as director of the Rosedale Trades program. Drew graduated from RBC and OSU with a BS in Mechanical Engineering. After working as a design engineer, he started a fence business, built and operates a luxury cabin business in the Hocking Hills area. Drew has been drawn to both the trades and real estate because of the way they combine mental and physical effort with creativity. His interests outside of work include disc golf (reigning champion of the RBC open!), architecture, old houses, and listening to folk music, hardcore music, and theology podcasts. He lives with his wife Carrie ('12-'13) and their three young children in nearby Mechanicsburg.

Steve Shoup ('76-'77) served as an instructor in Rosedale Trades last year and will continue assisting Drew in the coming school year.

## Financial Update

We are very grateful to close out this school year with a musical Double Header and auction that completed our capital campaign to raise \$6.3 million for a debt-free women's dorm. At the same time, we've noticed a drop in operations' funding that is \$55,000 below previous years. Your sustaining gifts enable us to become a primary learning destination for preparing Kingdom workers. Thanks for giving generously to operations at this midway point in the year.

## MIRROR

**Our Mission:** We exist to prepare Kingdom workers through collegiate biblical education in the context of authentic community, experiential learning opportunities and skill development, Spirit-led prayer, worship and devotional Bible reading.

**Alumni Updates:** Please go to [rosedale.edu/alumni-resources](https://rosedale.edu/alumni-resources) » "Update your Contact Information". High-res photos are always welcome. We'd love to be in touch!

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Call 740.857.1311 or e-mail [info@rosedale.edu](mailto:info@rosedale.edu).

**Thanks!**

## THE FEEL OF BEAUTY

**The feel of things matters.** Midway through my pastorate, I made the mistake of sharing from the pulpit that “you can’t have a bad day in a new pair of socks.” There is a certain “new sock feel” that feet were made to enjoy. That year, during pastor appreciation month, I received more socks than I knew what to do with. I didn’t have very many bad days over the next few months.

Several years ago, book publishers began using soft touch paper on the covers of an increasing number of books. I dare any one of you to deny that the feel of those books brings you a measure of joy. The feel of a thing matters.

Five years ago at RBC, we determined to “Add Beauty” to any project we undertook. Whether we built a building, sent a letter, or served a meal, it was important to add a touch of beauty. When beauty is added to a task or project, it conveys value to the one encountering the end result. This is why beautiful things bring joy and warmth to the soul. They convey love and care. They just feel right.

The trouble is that beauty costs us. It requires little energy, time, and money to create generic things with bland colors or textures. The bouquet of freshly

cut flowers on the dinner table don’t just appear, and repainting the garden shed demands forethought and follow-through. So why do so many find it worthwhile to add beauty, making things feel a certain way?

A Turkish proverb states, “First you feed the eyes, then the stomach.” Presentation is important. So is taste.

At RBC, we prepare Kingdom workers, disciples whose lives are shaped by the King. Life in Jesus and His Kingdom is like wearing a new pair of socks while holding a soft touch book and eating fresh warm bread—a million times over.

When we read Jesus’ words in His Sermon on the Mount, describing the life of a disciple, there is warmth. When we see Christ’s zeal and courage, we feel security and joy. When we receive His touch, the spaces around us change. Our lives become more like Jesus: more honest, pure of heart, merciful, courageous, humble, and meek. The world changes with Jesus people who look like the King. The feel and flavor of things changes. The world becomes more beautiful, like the King.

President  
JEREMY MILLER

