

THE TOWER

LOVELY LANE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH · BALTIMORE CITY STATION

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 6

February 2015



OPEN HEARTS

Lovely Lane United
Methodist Church
Baltimore City Station

“Mother Church of
American Methodism”

2200 St. Paul Street
Baltimore, Maryland
21218-5805

Rev. Nancy Nedwell,
Pastor
nancynedwell@verizon.net

John Strawbridge,
Lay Leader

Mr. Bill Scanlan Murphy,
Organist

Mr. Ivan Reyes,
Sexton

Office: 410-889-1512
Mon-Fri 9-3

Worship 11:00 AM

www.lovelylane.net
lovelylane@cavtel.net

Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.

One church work day we were doing some dust-producing work with the replacement of the ceiling tiles in the gym lobby. It was easy to keep track of us because we were leaving dusty footprints. Like dusty footprints on the floor, we leave behind us traces of our humanity, signs of limitedness and imperfection for all the world to see. We are human and unable to make of ourselves anything else. Dust reminds us of the messes we make in life, the messes we sometimes make of life. No matter how hard we try not to do so, we leave bits of dust behind us wherever we go.

That is why the Ash Wednesday liturgy has within the confession, an invitation for us to own up to the inevitable messiness of our lives. But, it is important for us to remember that confession always ends with absolution, with a declaration of forgiveness, with a word of grace and wholeness.

Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.

These words themselves contain both confession and absolution, law and gospel in equal measure. They echo the story in Genesis in which God took a lump of clay, a bit of dust, and breathed life into it, into us. We are dust, but we are very special dust, we are dust filled with the breath, the spirit, the very life of the creator God. We are earthly dust, springing forth from a multi-billion-year holy adventure. Dust is good, after all; it is the place of fruitfulness, of moist dark soil, and perhaps we are "star-dust," as Rex Hunt suggests, emerging from God's intergalactic creativity. We are frail, but we are also part of a holy adventure reflecting God's love over billions of years and in billions of galaxies. And when we die, we in all our dustiness will return to our maker, to God.

Far from being rejected for our dustiness, we will be gathered back to the one who gave our dust, who gave us, our very existence. In the meantime, between birth and death,

between dust and dust, we live in the world as imperfect human beings, as fractured angels, as what Martin Luther called being a saint and sinner at the same time.

All too often we see ourselves and our God at one end or the other of the holiness spectrum. Either we see God as a stern and unbending judge and ourselves as miserable sinners, or we see God as an indulgent grandparent who excuses our every mistake on the strength of great love and ourselves as sweet, harmless, and innocent little saints. The truth lies somewhere in the vast empty space in the middle, both for God and for us.

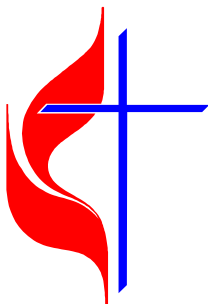
Yes, God is righteous and holy. Yes, God does hate sin and demands justice and obedience. Yes, we do often fail to measure up. Yes, God does love us with a complete and unconditional love, a love that casts our sin deep into the sea, as far from us as the east is from the west.

The problem is we can't find a nice middle image for God, halfway between these two extremes; there is no middle position, God is not either/or; God is both/and. God is both judge and savior just as we are both saint and sinner.

Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.

We are dust beneath God's holy feet and we are dust that has had holiness breathed into it. The God who condemns is also the God who saves, both, at the same time. Our Lenten journey is a journey to the cross, to the place where the ultimate mystery of God's eternal love is revealed. The cross is the place where God's judgment of sin and God's forgiveness of sin merge into the form of the crucified Christ.

So we mark our foreheads with ashes – not to take up shame and guilt but to recognize our inheritance as a child of God. We take up our task to do the work of Christ. We mark the start of our journey to the cross, so that when we get to Easter, we can look back and know that this Lent, we did something with God.



OPEN DOORS

RESTORATION GIFTS

In Memory of

Beatrice Badders

*Susan Preston and Craig Smith
Virginia Myers*

Chaplain and Mrs Charles Beatty
Florence Beatty

Leroy and Alberta Conklin
Carol and Bruce Quinan

Beth Glasgow
*Susan Preston and Craig Smith
Virginia Myers*

William Lane, IV
Katherine Rigney

Robert Shaw
Florence Beatty

Sally Tarr

Elizabeth and Joshua Smith

Jackie Watts
Jim and Theresa Watts

Robert Weiblen
Hines Family

In Honor of

Dorothy Krug
Patricia and Robert Welch

Nancy Nedwell
Sara Hale Henry

Dolores Shaw
Virginia Myers

LECTIONARY READINGS

February 1

4th Sunday after the Epiphany

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Psalm 111

I Corinthians 8:1-13

Mark 1:21-28

February 8

5th Sunday after the Epiphany

Isaiah 40:21-31

Psalm 147

1 Corinthians 9:16-23

Mark 1:29-39

February 15

Transfiguration Sunday

2 Kings 2:1-12

Psalm 50

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Mark 9:2-9

February 18

Ash Wednesday

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Psalm 51

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

February 22

Lent 1

Genesis 9:8-17

Psalm 25

1 Peter 3:18-22

Mark 1:9-15



Altar Flowers

February 1 In honor of my loving and supportive husband and family

by Roma Allen



February 8 In loving memory of Mary Shindle

by the United Methodist Historical Society

February 15 In loving memory of Carol Bates

by the Lovely Lane congregation

February 22 In loving memory of Read and Spencer Carter

by their cousin, Dorothy Krug

Tower Lighting

February 1 In honor of Betsy Fisk

by her loving family

February 8 In loving memory of Leslie and Viola Meinders

by their daughter, Linda Webb

February 15 With thanks to the Lovely Lane congregation for being so kind and thoughtful to Bob and me

by Roma Allen

February 22 In honor of Dorothy Krug

by Duncan Hodge and Maxine Stitzer



Tour Guides

Feb 1 Linda Webb

Feb 8 Eleanor Packard

Feb 15 Diane Macklin

Feb 22 Lee Enos

Greeters

Feb 1 Linda Keene/Michael Giles

Feb 8 Aimee/Ken Delaney

Feb 15 Hines Family

Feb 22 Greg Coates/Kathy Vitarelli

PRAYER VINE

If you have a prayer request or if you would like to receive requests through the prayer vine to pray for others, be in touch with

Carol Curtis 410-377-0695

Sally Knapp 410-667-9514

or e-mail at sjk17@verizon.net

Certain thoughts are prayers.

There are moments when, whatever be the attitude of the body, the soul is on its knees.

Victor Hugo

OPEN MINDS

From the Lay Leader ...

"What would Satan do?"

Recently, a friend of mine spoke about a project we needed to undertake because, as she said, Satan wanted us to fail. It seemed, at first, a just cause; to counter evil... to oppose sin.

We've all seen an endless line of "What Would Jesus Do?" merchandise: bumper stickers, key-chains, bracelets... And we like to think that we make decisions that Jesus would approve.

But is it sufficient motivation to do a thing simply because the devil wouldn't like it? Isn't it the same thing?

Well, no, it's not.

Recent events have seen the world awash with evil deeds. Acts of terror and hatred, crimes of abuse and cruelty. Reason enough for any God-fearing person to want to stand up and fight back.

E. Stanley Jones said, "A rattlesnake, if cornered will become so angry it will bite itself. That is exactly what the harboring of hate and resentment against others is - a biting of oneself. We think we are harming others in holding these spites and hates, but the deeper harm is to ourselves."

Whenever we act out of fear, we are fooling ourselves. Because we are not acting at all, but reacting. We are letting someone or something else set the course.

What Jesus would do - what Jesus would have us do - is the more difficult thing; to choose our own path. To be driven by assurance. Not to run away

from anything, but to find something worth running towards.

Jesus' ministry was never one of defense. By example, he taught us to not focus on what we may lose, but to think about what we could gain. The only things he asks us to leave behind are the traditional rewards of comfort: home, family, predictable work. He never wants us to travel with one eye on what's behind us, either out of fear or regret, but to look ahead.

It would be easy to let fear guide us. Because fear doesn't usually come with horns and a pitchfork... it often comes as a thousand gnats of doubt and nits of worry. In visions of all the ways in which things could go wrong. Maybe it would be better to just hole up and hold out until the storm passes and the road is clear.

But if we are followers of Jesus, then we must follow. Staying in one place is not an option.

At Lovely Lane, we have many projects before us. Some will fly over the bar we set; some will never get off the ground. Some will follow the predictable path; others will veer off in directions unexpected. What matters is that we chose to do not the things to block the devil, but to follow the Christ.

As Christians we do not fear a devil, or even work against him, but we pay him no mind. As Christians we are not God-fearing persons, but God-loving ones.

*Peace,
John Strawbridge*

CONGREGATION UPDATES

Maya Wilson and Edward Matthews, Jr were baptized on January 11. Maya is the daughter of Don Wilson and Shandia Brandon. Her brother is the son of Edward Matthews, Sr and Shandia Brandon. Evoyne Sinclair participated in this holy sacrament for her grandchildren.



The sympathy of the congregation is with Marian Munn Griffin at the death of her husband, Mike, on December 25th. Marian and her sisters, Eleanor Packard and Frances Roberts, grew up at Lovely Lane. We are grateful for this long association and ask for prayers of strength and comfort at this loss.

MANNA HOUSE

435 E 35TH STREET, BALTIMORE 21218
410-889-3001

STAPLES

sugar, coffee, rice, potatoes, pasta/sauce

HYGIENE ITEMS

toothbrush/paste, razors/cream, towels, shampoo/lotion, deodorant

WINTER ITEMS

coats, hats, thermal wear
hoodies, boots, gloves

Funds are needed
for operational expenses.

To celebrate the vision of God's Good News in Jesus Christ in liturgy, learning, and life, through the revitalization of our congregation, the restoration of our building, and the strengthening of our traditions, while recognizing our unique presence and mission in Baltimore City.

410-889-1512, M-F 9AM-3PM

LOVELY LANE TOWER

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LOVELY LANE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
2200 ST. PAUL STREET
BALTIMORE, MD 21218-5805

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CALENDAR

Sunday Morning Worship and Sunday School

*Adult Sunday School Class 10 AM
Worship 11 AM
Fellowship hour and Guided tour 12 PM*

Baltimore Lab School

Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, 3:15 PM

Baltimore Folk Music Society

Wednesdays, 8 PM (weekly dances in Lovely Lane hall)

Mother Seaton Academy Basketball

Wednesdays, Thursdays, gym, 5 PM

BLS Martial Arts

Saturday, Lovely Lane hall, 8 AM

Saturday, February 7

Church-wide work day, 9 AM

Friday, February 13

New Albany UMC, weekend retreat, 5 PM

Sunday, February 15

*St Matthew's UMC, worship and tour, 11 AM
Church Council, Lovely Lane hall, 12:30 PM*

Monday, February 16

*Holiday, church office closed
Goucher College event, lunch and tour, 12:15 PM*

Wednesday, February 18

Ash Wednesday service, sanctuary, 7 PM

Saturday, February 21

Futsal practice, gym, 11:30 AM

Sunday, February 22

*Lay Leadership event, tour and worship, 10 AM
Reisterstown UMC, tour, 12 PM*

Monday, February 23

Old Goucher Community Association, 7 PM

Tuesday, February 24

PALS-B, Spaghetti dinner, Lovely Lane hall, 4 PM

Saturday, February 28

Assumption College week retreat, 4 PM

