

# THE TOWER MONTHLY

LOVELY LANE | BALTIMORE CITY STATION

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## Lovely Lane United Methodist Church

MOTHER CHURCH OF  
AMERICAN METHODISM



2200 Saint Paul Street  
Baltimore MD 21218-5805

### Worship 11:00 AM

Office Hours  
Monday — Friday  
10 AM — 4 PM

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#### PASTOR

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#### LAY LEADER

John Strawbridge

#### ORGANIST

Bill Scanlan Murphy

#### PASTOR EMERITA

Rev. Nancy Nedwell

#### SEXTON

Ivan Reyes



## From the Pastor's Desk:

### On Our Way To Easter...

It's hard to believe that this Sunday is Palm Sunday, when we celebrate Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem. I don't know about you but it feels like we have sailed through Lent at warp speed. Perhaps the warm temperatures moved us through the season a bit quicker because it did not feel like we were laboring through winter and the snow and ice that often comes with it. We didn't have to shovel sidewalks once, I hope I haven't spoken too soon.

Signs of new life are all around us! The Red Buds bloomed earlier than I have ever seen them, the daffodils have come, the Cherry Blossoms have been in full gossy even though many of us have not ventured to see them. The "hint" of spring that we usually experience in the cold early dawn at our Easter Sunrise Service will certainly be more than that this year.

Lent is considered a time for personal transformation. Pastor Martin Singley shares a story that comes from the great spiritual revival that started taking place after the collapse of the Soviet empire. In one town a group of Christians were working to get some Bibles to the people of their community. Things were going very slowly and the shipment of Bibles kept getting put off. Then, one day, someone remembered that, back in the 1930's, when Stalin had purged the town of all believers, their Bibles had been confiscated and stored in a certain warehouse.

The believers who had owned those Bibles, of course, had all been executed. Well, they went to the warehouse and to the wonderment of all, there were the Bibles, stuffed into boxes stacked one atop another. There were thousands of them. The local officials gave permission to take the Bibles and distribute them to the townspeople. But while the group was doing this, one young man - a very skeptical, very anti-God and hostile student who had been hired just to help move the Bibles - was found hiding in a corner of the warehouse. He was sobbing uncontrollably.

When the group members went to help him, they found something amazing. In his hands was clutched a tattered old Bible. He admitted to stealing it. He had done that, he said, to find ways to ridicule the book and discredit these Christians. But when the young man had opened the Bible, he was confronted by a life-changing sight. Inside the front cover of the Bible - the one he had randomly stolen from among the thousands confiscated - was the handwritten signature of its owner. And it was the signature of his own grandmother! Have you ever experienced that kind of transformation?



Easter will be here before we blink our eyes. I hope this season of Lent, in all our social distancing, has helped you see Jesus of Nazareth in a new way, that our Lord and Savior has become a renewed force in your life bringing peace and hope for this journey we call life. Join with us as we find new ways for the Holy Week services on our way to Easter, the ultimate sign of new life and transformation.



Blessings,  
Rev. Debbie Scott

## *From the Lay Leader...*

Jesus had this neat little trick where he converted water into wine.

OK, it was more than a “neat little trick.” It was a miracle. A breath-taking, head-turning, jaw-dropping miracle. A bold showing at the very start of his ministry on earth that this was no mere teacher; this was the Son of God.

But I got to thinking recently that we can do essentially the same thing. Although we have to go about it very differently. If we use that water to nourish grape seeds, we can grow them into vines which eventually yield fruit. Then we take that fruit and prepare it and ferment it. And eventually we have wine. Wine made from water and processed by a grape vine.

But where Christ turned water into wine instantly, our grape vines will take a while. It takes three years for a vine to even produce fruit. And vines that are used by wineries may be up to thirty years old to be considered good. Even then, the wine made from those vines must itself be aged, usually over years.

So what is the point in comparing our slow and laborious efforts at making wine to Jesus’ miraculous and immediate transformation?

I have never been one to believe that the miracles of Christ that are related in scripture are merely there to impress us as godly feats of power. Each miracle in the Bible carries a lesson in faith and our understanding of God that is vastly more important and lasting than the wonder of the moment. In the story of Jesus turning water into wine the great work of God was not that some wedding guests got to enjoy more wine. That miracle was the Christ foretelling the scope of His ministry on earth. Jesus would take the water of baptism and turn it into the wine of the Last Supper...

the remembered blood shed for us. Jesus’ transformation of water into wine teaches us that if we are baptized in His name we will be transformed by His sacrifice.

What, then, do we learn by the long slow road of turning rain water into wine? I would contend that this process – like so much of nature – is also miraculous. We look at rainbows and sunsets, mountain ranges and canyons as little miracles. God’s masterful artistry. And even something simple like the falling of rain can be a miracle. Ask any farmer or vintner who has prayed for it. In Jesus the Christ, miracles come fast and full of wonder. But in the work of God’s children – you and me – miracles can still happen. They just happen slowly and demand work and patience.

God has made each of us God’s ministers on earth. Like Jesus, we are charged with going forth and spreading God’s good news. And we, too, can help people find transformation. We can lead our sisters and brothers from baptism to salvation through the Word. The vine that bears the fruit is our witness and confession. Our willingness to share scripture and live a life of faith. Our work to bring other to Christ.

The lesson we learn from the vine is that we must not be impatient. It takes time. Maybe a lot of time. It was three years from the wedding at Cana to the crucifixion at Calvary. About the same amount of time it takes a grape vine to bear fruit.

Enjoy April showers. Happy Easter.

**Peace,**  
*John Strawbridge*  
**LAY LEADER**



## Thank you: Lena Leone

We are grateful for the service of Lena Leone, Lovely Lane’s Administrative Assistant for many years. Last month, Lena let the church know that March would be her last month, and she would be moving on to new opportunities.

Please remember Lena and her family in your prayers for much success and health as they learn where God will lead them next.

### Join us for our Live-Stream Worship

Every Sunday during this time of social-distancing, we are posting a live-stream of Sunday Worship at Lovely Lane to our FaceBook page:

[www.FaceBook.com/LovelyLaneChurch](http://www.FaceBook.com/LovelyLaneChurch)

The video will remain available for one week and be replaced by a new service each Sunday.





## Abundance of Caution Prayer

BY KATY AND THE WORD

God, sometimes prayer is out of an abundance of caution. Nothing has hit close to home yet, but I feel shadows in the valley of death. I hear the cries of those around me. I can taste the panic in the air. How can I not pray? Out of an abundance of caution, I am lifting my eyes to the hills, from whom does my help come? My help comes from the Lord my God, they are my rock and my salvation. I pray for the miracles of this age: for people being connected to one another in this isolating time, for those who are struggling financially to experience generosity and hope while work is scarce and stability is scarcer. Lord out of an abundance, out of your abundance and our caution I pray that we all practice responsibility and community. Help us to hold onto peace, Encourage us with good courage, help us to grasp & hold onto all that which is good and remind us, especially in trying times, to render no one evil for evil. In your abundance and our caution, I pray. Amen.

## Nothing will ever be the same again: Temples & Resurrection

BY KATY AND THE WORD

Jesus promises that nothing will ever be the same again. But no one understands: Neither rabbis nor the government, neither his family nor the disciples.

But that is the word of Jesus: nothings will ever be the same again.

And then he tears down the temple: time shatters as a side effect.

The sky goes dark, the minutes become slippery and the future melts into the past. Jesus promises that nothing will ever be the same again.

And Lazarus knows it when he is resurrected from the dead, so does Jairus' daughter. Because after Resurrection, not one stone will remain upon another.

After Resurrection, everything changes in the world and the entire world is changed. They are not the same people, and their relationships will change.

What is an apocalypse? It is the uncovering of what is real, and what is rote.

Why is it an apocalypse? Because it's about time we wake up and pay attention.

As things crumble away, money becomes meaningless and hugs become everything. Power disintegrates, but conversations become lifesaving.

Jesus promises that nothing will ever be the same again.

And we pray for that, when we pray thy kingdom come, thy will be done.

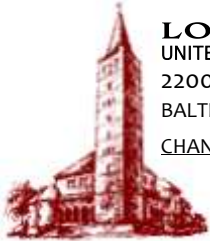
As things change, as every single thing we do changes from work, to family, to finances. As this moment becomes a part of the social conscious memory, let us acknowledge that maybe it's good that nothing will ever be the same again.

### Social Distance like a Wesley

Avoid all the people you can,  
by all the means you can,  
in all the ways you can,  
in all the places you can,  
at all the times you can,  
as long as ever you can



**OUR MISSION:** 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.



**LOVELY LANE**  
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TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL  
*THANK YOU FOR PROMPT DELIVERY!*

**With all the closings and cancellations, I have some GOOD NEWS!**  
**Easter is NOT cancelled!**  
**Christ is still risen!**

TheHorseMaple.org TheHorseMaple.org



### EASTER

Bishop Easterling has asked that all churches in Baltimore-Washington remain closed through the month of April. This means we will not be able to gather for our customary Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday or Easter Day services. But CHRIST IS RISEN and we will celebrate wherever we are. We are live-streaming service on our Facebook page every Sunday. Keep checking our website and this news bulletin for news about when we will come together again and rejoice in the risen Christ.