

THE TOWER MONTHLY

LOVELY LANE | BALTIMORE CITY STATION

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Lovely Lane United Methodist Church

MOTHER CHURCH OF
AMERICAN METHODISM



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Worship Online 11:00 AM

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Monday — Friday
10 AM — 4 PM

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From the Pastor's Desk: *We Are the Church Together*

This pandemic became very real to me yesterday (5/18). As the day went on, I was running a fever, had a sore throat, and just could not get warm. I had a sleepless night, spiking a fever. By the time I pulled myself out of bed (5:30 am), the dogs refused to get up because it was too early. My fever was 100.5, high for me. All those stories about folks getting COVID-19 were circulating in my head...especially the part of how fast they go downhill. I was scared. I have been very cautious, following all the guidelines, as all of you have been.

Yesterday one of our clergy colleagues posted that his son tested positive with no outside contact to the world, no visitors, groceries delivered and wiped down upon receipt. He said, "My one sister compares the virus to evil glitter -- it gets everywhere and is nearly impossible to eliminate completely." I called my doctor first thing yesterday, we had a virtual appointment, and by just after noon I was driving through the parking garage at Suburban Hospital in Bethesda getting tested for COVID-19. It was quick, simple, and I was very grateful to those who were performing the tests. And then I waited. Did I mention I was scared?

I knew I had done all I could, placed it in God's hands, and had a really solid night sleep. My temperature was 96.8 this morning. My doctor called and said the test was negative but wants me to take a little break, more mental than physical. So I am going to throttle back a bit, grateful for good news, mindful of how many have not received the same news and lost their lives to this horrific disease. May God give them and their families peace.

Before I close, let me share that there are many who are wondering when Lovely Lane UMC will reopen. We are exercising great caution; a task force has been put in place to guide us through this process. There's a "Historic Site" plaque located in front of the Gilliam United Methodist Church building. The final sentence on the plaque reads:

"A church is never measured by its building, rather, in terms of service to the community and its reflection of the Holy Spirit which is its true purpose."

This sign in front of a small rural church in Louisiana provides an excellent reminder of who we should continue to aspire to be as the Body of Christ even as we prepare to reopen our church building in the midst of these pandemic times.

Regardless of "where" the Lovely Lane United Methodist Church has gathered for the past 248 years, the "place" has not been the focus and reason for its continued existence, rather ascribing to a higher purpose has been the vision that has directed its "way forward."

As we make plans to return to our respective church "buildings" safely may we also remember the wisdom expressed not only in the words on the Gilliam UMC sign, but also in the following song in the United Methodist Hymnal.

Blessings,
Rev. Debbie Scott

We Are The Church

I am the church! You are the church
We are the church together
All who follow Jesus
All around the world
Yes, we're the church together

The church is not a steeple
The church is not a resting place
The church is a people
With many kinds of faces
All colors and all ages, too
From all times and places

From the Lay Leader...

I sometimes like to flatter myself that my little church newsletter columns might still be around and be getting read years and years from now. So if I write this month about the thing that is defining our lives right now – the coronavirus pandemic – I wonder what someone who is reading these words years in the future might think.

This future reader will know if it was too soon for me to start talking about lessons learned from these times. Am I too close? Too involved? Is there too much yet to be revealed? But the historian in me can't help but want to comment on history even as we are still living it.

Because to some degree, these times will define each of us. They are changing how we see ourselves and the world in which we live. For me, as a post-war child, I have never known the same event to be occurring everywhere in the world at once. Every human being on this planet is currently living the same truth. Certainly there have been other "big stories." News headlines that garnered global attention. But usually most of the world have been spectators watching the story of a few. This time, no one is outside. Everyone is a player on the stage.

As a Christian, I can't help but view these things through the lens of faith. And not just in the moralistic way; noting how trying times bring out the best or worst of our natures. For me there's something more foundational that I've never had the chance to witness before. I am seeing that the idea of us all being one people and one world under God is very clear. If this story can be everywhere and in everything, how much more so is it obvious that God can be everywhere and in everything.

And even more personally, if living with this can shape our everyday life, and everything that we do (or don't do) ... if it can be in our thoughts everyday and constantly, how much more so can God be in our lives and in everything we do (or don't do).

And there's more.

My imaginary future reader may note that this pandemic has not been with us all that long (from a historic perspective) to be impacting our thoughts so much. Just about six months from the first known outbreaks in China in late December, to where we are in the U.S. in early June. It's astonishingly little time for something to go from one small place to covering the globe.

Again, in my faith life and learning, I am finally grasping just how closely connected we all are. In the age of television and the internet we have gotten used to ideas and images spreading quickly. But this – awful as it is – did not spread through technology. It spread through close proximity. That means in just six months, everyone on the planet has been in arms reach of everyone else. I recently learned that my brother knows someone who knows the first person in the U.S. confirmed to have contracted the disease. Only three handshakes away from myself.

But if we can distance ourselves – and I don't mean socially distance but historically distance – there is a great lesson to be learned. This close connection has spread tragedy and suffering. But imagine if we could put this same connection to use spreading Good News and healing. This is the foundational idea that we in the church need to be convinced of. An idea... a good word... can truly spread from one person with no technology and no world platform... can spread around the world. If we could spread the love of Christ from person to person, it could touch everyone on the planet in just six months.

It's awfully soon to be looking on the bright side, and finding silver linings. But for me, I am finding renewed faith in the truth that the actions of ordinary people really do make a difference, and really do go forth to all nations.

Peace,
John Strawbridge
LAY LEADER



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

Or

<http://lovelylane.net/>
(Just Click On The Video)

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

Just sent a
dove out my
window. When
it comes back
with a piece of
toilet paper, I
will know the
virus is finished.

RESTORATION AND NATIONAL FUND GIVING

We continue to make progress in our capital campaign to fund the creation of the **Lovely Lane Arts & Neighborhood Center**. We launched our capital campaign in October 2019 to raise funds to help restore and rehabilitate our historic building in order to increase the utilization of our underused space by community groups. We are hard at work to meet the first threshold of that campaign. We are nearly at the halfway mark to raise the required 2:1 required match to receive the full \$250,000 capital grant award made in October 2019 from the National Fund for Sacred Places (NFSP) to begin work on this building upgrade.

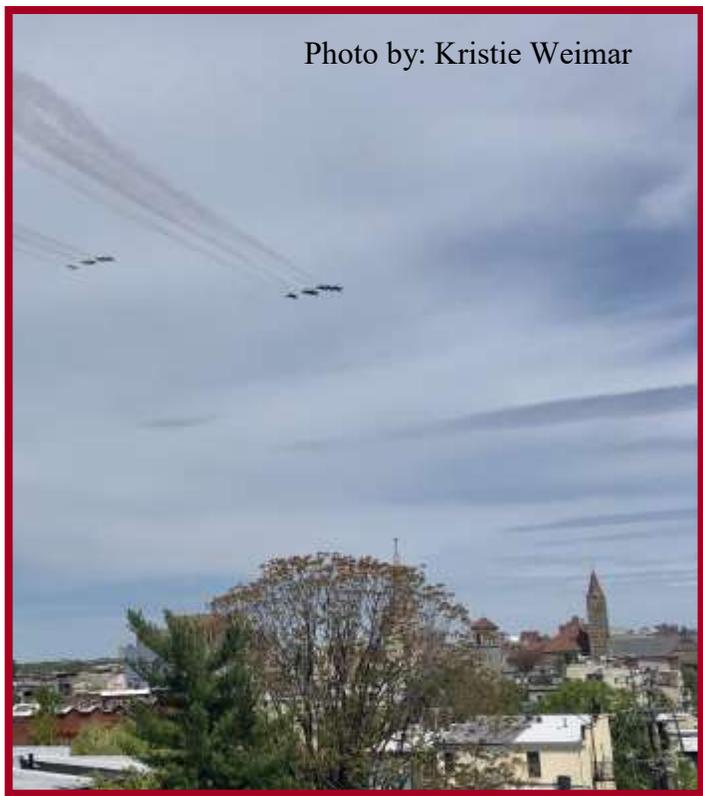
We hope to have favorable grant award decisions to report to you next month from the funding requests (over \$650,000) under review by local foundations and government agencies. We have received funds from the following donors since we published a listing in the May 2020 Tower edition:

Patterson Memorial Association (2020 and 2021 gifts)
The Michael and Susan Ford Charitable Gift Fund IHO Rev. Nancy Nedwell

We are also proud to announce the publication of our first digital newsletter in May 2020 to provide to our congregation, donors, and supporters an illustrated update of our progress to create the **Lovely Lane Arts & Neighborhood Center**. We intend to publish this newsletter 4 to 6 times per year to communicate our fundraising results and construction progress. You can find a link to this newsletter on our website at <http://lovelylane.net/>. Go to our Publication page and select Building Project Newsletter.

To signup to receive future digital newsletters, or for more information about how you can help us realize the goals of this capital project to restore and rehabilitate our beautiful building, please email lovelylane-center@gmail.com or call the church at 410-889-1512.

Fly Over in Honor of Healthcare Workers



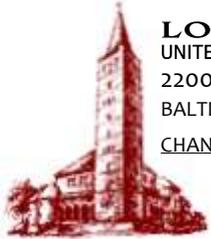
We know this was a very unusual year, but we still want to honor and give thanks to our graduates.

Congratulations on all your hard work!

Photo: National Cathedral in Washington, DC

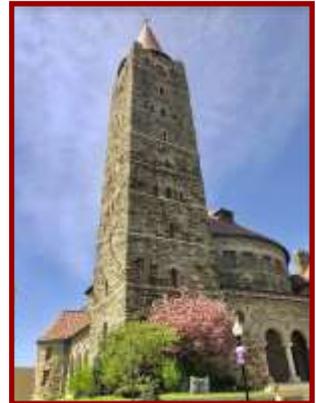


OUR MISSION: To celebrate the vision of God’s Good News in Jesus Christ in liturgy, learning, and life, through the revitalization of our congregation, the restoration of our building, and the strengthening of our traditions, while recognizing our unique presence and mission in Baltimore City.



LOVELY LANE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL
THANK YOU FOR PROMPT DELIVERY!

Mother’s Day Flowers



Fly Over in Honor of Healthcare Workers



Mollie During Conference Calls

