

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 Online 11:00 AM

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Monday — Friday
10 AM — 4 PM

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From the Pastor's Desk:



His name is Joseph. A homeless gentleman who stands at the corner of MLK and Pennsylvania Ave. Joseph caught my eye early on when I drive to Lovely Lane UMC. I've seen him in the blazing summer heat, and the coldest days of winter. I've seen him soaking wet and dirty as can be. I think Joseph looks a bit like an ancient monk; long hair, lengthy beard, and bright blue eyes.

I only get bits of his story, a minute at a time. I know he used to drive a tow truck. I know he has a young adult son who he raised after his wife died. I know he doesn't want to be on the street any more than you or I would. Joseph is an old soul. I would guess in his early 50's, he talks about justice and mercy, quoting scripture. He tries to talk to the younger guys who think it is cool to be on

the streets, "They can't get it through their heads that there is no glory in living like this. I try to tell them. I worry about them; they have to take care of their feet. I tell them they need to keep their socks clean." Simple, basic knowledge.

I don't know Joseph's full story, why he ended up homeless. But I do know that Joseph is a decent human being who does not want to be homeless. He often talks about how much he'd like his own place (even a simple room) to be working to support himself. Like many in his situation, he does not trust shelters. When the pandemic descended upon us, I know how my life has been affected. But to hear the changes through Joseph's voice has been very powerful. He has no source of news to understand what is happening around him...just word of mouth. His simple means of support, begging on a street corner has been greatly curtailed due to the reduced amount of traffic.

Add to that the violence that occurs between the homeless and other marginalized folks; it has become overwhelming. One Sunday, many of you have heard, I drove to church and saw Joseph sitting on the curb on the side of the road...not working the drivers in his usual jovial way.

I asked what was wrong, and he shared that he had been robbed at gunpoint the day before when he came to the aide of one of his friends that was intentionally hit by a car. They took his backpack with all his possessions and his last three dollars. He was just broken, and it broke me too. By the end of that Sunday service, a donation had come in to buy Joseph a new backpack and some new clothes.

I know I can't make a difference for all the homeless in Baltimore, but Joseph tells me regularly how thankful he is for the support we give him. "You are a lifeline for me, Rev. Deb." "Whatever you did for the least of these, you did for me." Mt. 25:40 We can make a difference one person at a time when we reach out in Christ's name. How have you reached out to others in these challenging times?



Blessings,
Rev. Debbie Scott

From the Lay Leader...

I like to keep a neat desktop. Whether it's my literal physical desktop, or my virtual computer desktop. I only keep things on my desktop that need attention, so a neat desktop helps me feel in control – I know what's done, and what needs doing.

Right now, my desktop is anything but neat.

Right now, I have so many tasks that need doing. Task that are on hold. Tasks that are waiting. Waiting for... someday.

On my desktop right now, there are notes about re-opening the church. That task is waiting until it feels safe. Next to that is my credit for an airline reservation... waiting until we can travel again. Here are some notes for a piece of trustee business... that's on hold indefinitely. And here's a service notice for my car. That's waiting for the dealer to accept appointments.

Over here I have a proposal from a contractor for a new shed. He'll get to that when he can. Under that are my notes about Lovely Lane's PPP funds. That's waiting on congress... don't hold your breath there. Draft of the Strawbridge Shrine fall newsletter and Annual meeting? On hold. The next lesson of our "Who Are We?" class? Someday. Tour guide training? Back Burner.

I think the idea of catching the virus has us all a little worried. But I also think all the things that we have unfinished now are what is really causing us anxiety. The uncertainty. The frustrated expectations. So much we haven't been able to do or to complete. It feels like everything is hanging over our heads... and not knowing when we will reach an end is a continuing source a stress.

And so it is that in these days... far from Easter... I have begun thinking about Christ's words on the cross; "It is finished." These words have been much

discussed over the years as scholars have debated exactly what "it" is that is finished. The prophecies? The work of salvation? Christ's time on earth? They have always seemed to be sad words. Uttered as the life left Jesus' body. Carrying a sense of ending. Resignation.

But now, in this time of unfinished business, these words have – for the first time – sounded glorious to me. "It is finished!" What a great feeling – to be finished. How wonderful to be able to say that. It is a gift to be able to put something behind... and move on!

Without joining that debate about "*precisely what Jesus meant,*" let's accept that in his sacrifice on the cross Christ completed the new covenant. That now, by grace, we are freed from sin. And in these days when we feel up to our necks in unfinished – or even un-started – business, can we not appreciate what a relief it is that we don't have to have redemption on our "to do" lists?

What a weight that would be. If I feel so encumbered by the drag of ordinary business, how hopeless would I feel if I were not assured of salvation? Sure... we appreciate the gift that Christ has given; that upon our death we will live again. But maybe these challenging times will make us even more appreciative of that gift on every day... not just on the last day.

That simple gift of "finished." The blessed assurance of "done." No further stress. No worry. No uncertainty.

They are words that I treasure today much more than I could have at Easter. "It is finished." I want to say them – and hear them – over and over.

It is finished. Halleluiah. Thanks be to God.

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.

RESTORATION AND NATIONAL FUND FOR SACRED PLACES (NFSP) GIVING

We continue to be grateful for the ongoing contributions and grant awards we have received towards our 2:1 matching requirement of the \$250,000 NFSP capital grant award. On August 14, 2020, we published our 2nd digital newsletter documenting our success to date to meet the required \$500,000 match (90% or \$450,000 has been raised) and develop architectural documents to begin the bricks-and-mortar project to create the Lovely Lane Arts & Neighborhood Center within the walls of our historic church building.

After the newsletter was released, Lovely Lane received the following words of support from our District Superintendent:

Greetings Lovely Lane!

I'm so excited about this season in your ministry as you move forward and onward with the capital campaign. It's also wonderful to see such broad-based support from across the community and our Connection. You remain in my prayers and I remain in your corner as we watch God continue to move!

Blessings and Peace,

*Rev. Dr. Wanda Bynum Duckett
Baltimore Metropolitan District Superintendent
Baltimore Washington Conference*

Please find the details of this progress on our website: <http://lovelylane.net/home/building-project-newsletter/>

We have received funds from the following donors since we published a listing in the August 2020 Tower edition:

Pamela Abutaleb
Rev. Edwin Ankeny
John Strawbridge
Joan and Howard Tillman

For more information about how you can help us realize the goals of the NFSP-launched project to restore and rehabilitate our beautiful building, please email lovelylanecenter@gmail.com or call the church at 410-889-1512.



We continue to monitor the ever-changing COVID-19 outbreaks and will hold off making a decision about reopening the church until it is safer. We are thankful for your continued support in these uncharted waters.



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.



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TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL
THANK YOU FOR PROMPT DELIVERY!

A vibrant watercolor background with various colors like red, blue, yellow, and green.

LOVE IS NOT ALL YOU NEED.

- * You need mutual respect.
- * You need support.
- * You need trust.
- * You need boundaries.
- * You need people to be there when it matters.
- * You need space to grow and acceptance when you do.
- * You need people to show their love in a way you can understand.

Nedra Tawwab

An illustration of two hands holding a stream of water, with the water falling and creating a fountain effect.

"There is a fountain inside you.
Don't walk around
with an empty bucket."

Rumi ♥