

THE TOWER MONTHLY

LOVELY LANE | BALTIMORE CITY STATION



VOLUME 20, ISSUE 5

February 2023

Lovely Lane
United Methodist Church

MOTHER CHURCH OF
AMERICAN METHODISM



2200 Saint Paul Street
Baltimore MD 21218-5805

Worship Online 10:15 AM

Office Hours
Tuesday, Wednesday,
Thursday,
& Friday
10:00 Am — 4:00 PM

Phone
410-889-1512

Email
LovelyLane.BCS@gmail.com

Website
LovelyLane.net

PASTOR
Rev. Debbie Scott
revdeb8@aol.com
301-641-4601

LAY LEADER
John Strawbridge

ORGANIST
Bill Scanlan Murphy

PASTOR EMERITA
Rev. Nancy Nedwell

SEXTON
Ivan Reyes

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Brandon Shaw McKnight



From the Pastor's Desk: CHURCH REFORMATION

Reformation

As I was preparing my sermon on I Cor. 1:10-18 (1/22/23) about Christian unity and division in the church, this post appeared as one of Bishop Karen Olivito's weekly notes to her Annual Conference. It seemed like just the update needed to see where we are as a denomination of United Methodists:

A few days ago, I had an interview with Yellowstone public radio. The interviewer, Kay Erickson, wanted to ask me questions about the current events in The United Methodist Church. I steeled myself for her questions but then was delightfully caught off guard by her first question:

"What can you say about the reformation happening in The United Methodist Church?"

"Reformation". I like that.

Her question had me exploring the meaning of reformation. One source describes it as "improvement (or an intended improvement) in the existing form or condition of institutions or practices etc.; intended to make a striking change for the better in social or political or religious affairs." Synonyms for reformation include "improvement", "betterment", "correction". Instead of "split", "schism", or "disaffiliation", what if we saw this moment in the life of The United Methodist Church as a reformation moment?

If we were honest with one another, we would note that it is time for a reformation. While the Gospel message of love of God and neighbor hasn't changed, the world around us has. Our communities are filled with "Nones" (those who have had no encounter with the Church) and "Dones" (those that have left for a variety of reasons, including spiritual trauma). In fact, the "Dones" have increased in numbers as studies show that church attendance has dropped off since COVID. How we share this life-saving, life-transforming love of God in Jesus Christ needs reforming in order to reach people outside the walls of our church.

Imagine a church where all people in your community can call home, receive a welcomed embrace, and find encouragement and strength for the challenges they face. Imagine a church that sees new people as a gift from God, who possess skills and life experiences that can enrich our common life. Imagine a church that is a community hub, where people come for learning, recovery, recreation, and creating change.

Imagine worship opportunities that are on days and times other than Sunday mornings, so that people can receive spiritual nourishment and a faith community when they most need it. Imagine a church that centers those lives that the rest of the world shoves to the margins. Imagine a church where bible study is intrinsically related to service and acts of justice in the world.

Imagine a church that is less interested in building and ministry maintenance and instead with how to best be organized to meet the needs of a hurting world. Imagine a church whose connective tissue isn't the building but the strength of the community. Imagine a church that is always open to the Holy Spirit's leading, allowing itself to change in order to remain faithful. I am ready to engage in the work of reformation. How about you? With love, Bishop Karen

My friend, Bishop Olivito, gives us a great deal to think about in this moment in time when we hear more and more UM Congregations are being pulled to leave their church heart...much based on misinformation. The Global Methodist Church is doing

their best to spread lies and threats to get lifelong Methodists to leave our beloved denomination. May we always hold the door open for those who want to return when “they see the light” and return to their senses and the heart of God. We are one in the Spirit! And they will know us by our love! That is my experience of Lovely Lane UMC and I am grateful!

Be Blessed, Rev. Deb



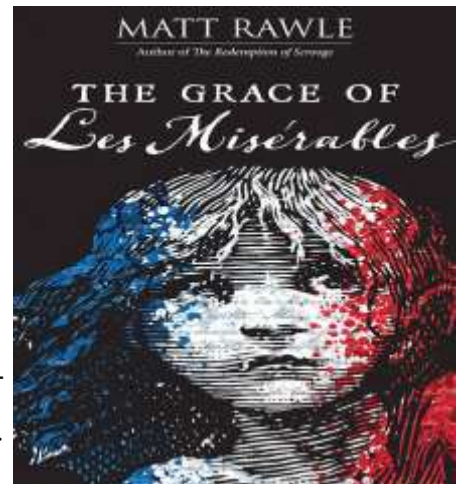
LENT STUDY WEDNESDAY MORNINGS AT 8:00 AM BY ZOOM

STARTING FEB. 22ND (ASH WEDNESDAY) THROUGH MARCH 29TH

Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables* is a truly epic story. Whether you’ve tackled the 1,400-page 19th century novel, witnessed the Broadway musical (and memorized its soundtrack), or seen the several screen adaptations of it, you already know the power of its story.

In the six-week study *The Grace of Les Misérables*, author and pastor Matt Rawle dives into six ideals found in the story—grace, justice, poverty, revolution, love, and hope—each represented by a character in Hugo’s story. As these imperfect and relatable characters interact, we can see how these ideals work together (perhaps even in spite of each other) out in the world.

In keeping with his previous works, Matt Rawle brings us to the intersection of Church and Pop Culture by drawing parallels between the iconic story and musical and our Christian calling, inspiring us to both understand our faith and live it out in the world. Please order through Amazon.



Ash Wednesday Service at 7:00PM in the Chapel on Feb. 22nd

We Celebrated the life of Robert Furbay on Jan. 22nd



From the Lay Leader...

February has me thinking about time. It is the shortest month. A month in which we count the days until we see spring on the horizon. And the days themselves are short, with only about ten and a half hours of daylight each. Yet, being cold and dark, it is a month that can seem to drag on endlessly.

Matthew, Chapter 6 contains the famous “Consider the lilies of the field” passage. It is preached to be reassuring as in verse 34; “So do not worry about tomorrow...” But then it winds up with, “for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.” Kind of a splash of cold water at the end.

So with trouble tomorrow and trouble today, does God offer any comfort as we think about time? Psalm 90 offers considerable meditation on time, including:

”The days of our life are seventy years
or perhaps eighty, if we are strong;
even then their span is only toil and trouble;
they are soon gone, and we fly away.”

Again – not overflowing with optimism. But the psalm continues, with a thought that perhaps offers a spark of hope, “So teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart.”

Count our days? Usually being reminded that our days are numbered is a threat, not encouragement. The psalmist wants us to remember that time itself is a gift from God. A precious and uniquely mortal gift. Our sense of the past and future – memory and hope – come from this gift that God Himself does not possess, but which He gives to us. But isn’t God eternal? Doesn’t God have all time?

We know God to be omnipresent, which we take to mean “everywhen all at once.” But it also means that God is “every thing all at once.” God lives in every hour and every moment all together.

For us, time comes like boxcars in a train; one day and one event after the other. This is what theoretical physicists call “linear time.” But these same scientist also study theories of non-linear time in which seconds do not flow in order, but overlap... speed up, slow down or even run backward. They even speak of the idea of being “outside” of time. (I often think theoretical physicists must have a better understanding of God than most of us).

So certainly, God’s experience of time is very different from our own. God’s eternal nature suggests that God is “outside” of time. When we leave our mortal life, we are promised that we will join God in this Eternal living. But for now, we are given... well, the concept of “now.” In this life, God has given us the ability to live in the Now. To enjoy the simple and dependable order of yesterday, today and tomorrow. To be able to compare those three, and appreciate the value of today – which never was before and never shall be again.

When the psalm asks God to “teach us to count our days,” it is wanting us to appreciate the amazing gift of time that God has given us. The freedom to live in today and only today, yet hold on to memory and nourish hope. If we can do that, we may have “a wise heart.”

Perhaps the most famous Biblical passage on time is Ecclesiastes 3; “For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven...” It is quoted at weddings, during funerals and in pop music. But the lesson goes beyond the familiar “a time to seek and a time to lose” rhythm. Verses 11-13 tell us, “He has made everything suitable for its time...it is God’s gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil.”

It is God’s gift. Whether spent at work or in play, with family or alone; never forget that time spent is currency from the Lord.

Peace,

John Strawbridge

LAY LEADER



WORK TO RESTORE, REHABILITATE AND MAINTAIN OUR 19TH CENTURY BUILDING

21ST CENTURY PROJECT UPDATE

Progress in 2022

Despite COVID-related supply chain delays and inflationary pressures, all work on Phase 1 to upgrade our historic building for increased public use in the 21 st century has been completed. The latest improvement—air conditioning in Fellowship Hall—is fully operational as of December 2022 to add to the previous work started in 2019:

- new ADA access ramp on St. Paul Street,
- 4 additional public restrooms on the building’s main floor
- restored Tiffany windows in the Brannan Chapel,
- new flat roof over the 1930s addition
- upgraded single-source system for improve building electrical capacity
- improved fire safety systems throughout building

Plans for the Year Ahead

As we proceed in 2023, we are undertaking additional upgrades (both operational and structural) with already committed funds:

- re-design of website
- replacement of exterior church signage
- new security infrastructure within entry porticos on St. Paul and 22 nd Streets
- Phase 2 work to include architectural design, gymnasium-level locker room upgrades, development of building use outreach protocols and booking systems, and other performance space improvements

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

We envision incremental restoration work in 2023-2025 to restore additional Tiffany windows in the Chapel as well as wall and floor surfaces of our Chapel and South Tower on 22nd Street. Additionally, we are seeking new funding sources to help underwrite building use outreach activities for sustainability.

We are soliciting public agencies and private foundation/corporate funding sources to add to gifts from individuals to commit to each of these priority components as funds become available. All parties interested in supporting this important work should contact lovelylanecenter@gmail.com for details or follow the link given below to make donations.



MAINTENANCE OF PAST RESTORATION WORK

In 2022, the majority of restoration/maintenance expenses were for boiler welding, piping and plumbing improvements. Additionally, the porch roof over the administrative door was replaced.

BUILDING FUNDS DONOR UPDATE

The Lovely Lane congregation continues to be very grateful for the support received to 1) pursue our ambitious 21 ST Century Project restoration and rehabilitation goals and 2) replenish our escrowed restoration maintenance fund for our 19th Century building, built as a centennial monument to the founding of Methodism in the United States in 1784.

We have received the following donations since we published a listing in the December 2022 Tower edition.

The Restoration Fund – to maintain building integrity

Robert & Shirley Coffman
 Miriam Cohen IHO Duncan Hodge
 Catherine Cotter
 Dr. Wanda Bynum-Duckett
 Gamble/Gilkerson Gift Fund
 Roger Katzenberg
 Carrie Harnick
 Hodge/Stitzer Gift Fund
 Sanctuary Gift Annuity account residual balances
 Rev. Arthur & Ann Yost

The 21st Century Building Project Fund – to improve building for greater community use

Vaness Harnick
 Donald and Joanna Kann
 Sally J. Knapp
 Patterson Memorial Association
 David and Marilyn Warshawsky
 Rev. Arthur & Ann Yost

*To make a new donation to either of our Building Funds,
 please send checks--payable to the church and indicating "Restoration" or
 "21st Century Building Project" in memo line of the check--
 to Lovely Lane United Methodist Church, 2200 St. Paul Street, Baltimore, MD 21218
 or go to our website to donate online: www.lovelylane.net/donation.*

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
2200 ST. PAUL STREET
BALTIMORE, MD 21218-5805
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-profit
Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Baltimore, MD
Permit No. 6575



TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL
THANK YOU FOR PROMPT DELIVERY!

