

# THE TOWER MONTHLY

LOVELY LANE | BALTIMORE CITY STATION



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March 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: "A Season of Transitions"

In the United Methodist Church, pastors are appointed by the Bishop. Local churches, unlike many denominations, do not go through a search process for their next pastor. With input from the congregation and the Staff Parish Relations Committee, a profile is developed and shared with the District Superintendent. Based on that profile, the District Superintendents consult with the Bishop to make new appointments.

Some have equated the process with an arranged marriage. I'd like to believe, with much prayer and discernment from all involved, that God makes clear the next pastor to assume responsibilities for "Word, Order and Sacrament" in a particular local UMC. When you sit in the sanctuary of Lovely Lane UMC, you can study all the names of the pastors who have come before me.

Soon, my time will be finished (save the date for a celebration on June 10th ) and a new name will follow mine. This appointment will take effect on July 1st , my last Sunday will be June 11th closing the chapter on a 43 year career as a United Methodist minister. But a new chapter will be beginning for Lovely Lane UMC as the Bishop has appointed, in one of the first of this new season, Rev. Levon Sutton. I'm sure you will give him the welcome and support that you have given me. Below you can see his biography. May God be with us all in this season of transition.

Blessings, Rev. Debbie Scott



### Reverend Levon D. Sutton - Provisional Member,

Baltimore Washington Annual Conference United Methodist Church Rev. Levon Sutton is a Provisional Elder in Baltimore Washington Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Rev. Sutton currently serves as the Associate Pastor at Grace United Methodist Church in Baltimore, Maryland and is responsible for serving and leading the church in the areas of Social Justice, Mission and Outreach, Congregational Care, Christian Formation and Discipleship. Rev. Sutton is responsible for leading worship, shepherding small study groups, leading church staff, engaging with outside organizations, coordinating fund raising activities to support the many feeding and justice ministries, providing pastoral care and visitation to many homebound members, and connecting members of the community with emergency resources, support and care.

Rev. Sutton received his appointment to Grace United Methodist Church in 2021 after having served as the Lead Pastor for Emanuel United Methodist Church since July 2017. A Licensed Local Pastor in the Baltimore-Washington Conference since 2017, Rev. Sutton was commissioned as a Provisional Elder during the 2021 Annual Conference. Rev. Sutton discerned the call to declare his candidacy for ordination as a member of Epworth United Methodist Chapel in Baltimore County, Maryland. Among the many activities Rev. Sutton participated in at Epworth Chapel, he faithfully served the congregation as the Sunday School Superintendent, and Vice President of the Epworth United Methodist Men and member of both the Discipleship Ministry

and Mission team and Christian Education Children's and Youth Ministry..

In addition to Rev. Sutton's giftedness in ministry, he also brings over 25 years of professional experience in the legal and technology industries and has worked for several law firms, municipal and federal government agencies, and private corporations. Levon's professional experience includes serving as a Courtroom and Trial Clerk for the District of Columbia Superior Court Domestic Violence Section, Project Manager and Technology Consultant for several corporations and national and international law firms, and Director and Senior Advisor in the area of Information Governance and Mobile Device Management (MDM). Rev. Sutton was also previously responsible for managing a \$30 million annual budget for the Civil Division of the United States Department of Justice's Office of Litigation Support. In his role as Senior Manager and Deputy Division Director, Rev. Sutton was responsible for recruiting and providing oversight for, and leading a 300+ staff workforce which consisted of legal and technology professionals, administrators, and subject matter experts.

Rev. Sutton received his Bachelors of Arts Degree from Kenyon College (Gambier, Ohio) in 1997, and his Masters of Divinity from Wesley Theological Seminary (Washington, DC) in 2005. Rev. Sutton is also a professionally trained Life Coach and has a passion for using the gifts God has endowed him with to help others thrive in every human endeavor.

A native son of Cleveland, Ohio, Rev. Sutton has called the Washington, DC and Baltimore area his home since June of 1997 and brings with him genuine passion for God's church and God's people in every aspect of life. He is a proud member of the historic international Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. and strives to embody the core principle of "Achievement in Every Human Endeavor."

Rev. Sutton also has a love for music of all periods and genres and enjoys a variety of weekend activities. He is committed to and promotes personal fitness and spiritual and mental wellness while admittedly having a love for all types of desserts and treats!

With his wife Adrienne (B.A. Penn State University) of 20 years, Rev. Sutton is a proud parent of two daughters, Simone (1st year student, Towson University) and Charlotte (Junior, Towson High School) and is a dog dad to a standard poodle, Pepper.



## *From the Lay Leader...*

There is an old English expression; “Mad as a March Hare.” This characterization grew from people observing wild rabbits in early spring. These hares would jump and flip, run to no apparent purpose, and engage in what looked like boxing matches with each other. Nowadays we recognize these “mad” actions as courtship rituals and celebrations of spring after the long winter.

It is a wonder, then, that no one has coined the term “Mad as a March Christian.” After all, Christians engage in some pretty “mad” behavior in the spring. They smear ashes on their heads, and go about waving palm branches. They may even paint eggs in bright colors then hide them where they can’t be seen. Madness.

Then their actions get even crazier. They start loving their enemies. Forgiving offenses. They start saying they are “blessed” when they are meek, persecuted and insulted, or poor in spirit.

These mad March Christians believe that eternal life comes from death, that Jesus got up and walked away from his tomb, and that wealth comes from sacrifice.

They say things like, “The first shall be last.” Or, “I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.” And, “The greatest among you shall be your servant.”

E. Stanley Jones, a famous March Christian, said, “Nothing is ever really yours until you share it.” Surely that is evidence of madness. Jones’s ashes are buried at Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Baltimore, and also in India. Proving that, like Francis Asbury and Robert Strawbridge, he was itinerant even after death. Mad as hatters, the lot of them.

And speaking of the dead not lying still, Charles Dodgson once wrote, “I believe that when you and I come to lie down for the last time, if only we can keep firm hold of the great truths Christ taught us—our own utter worthlessness and His infinite worth; and that He has brought us back to our one Father, and made us His brethren, and so brethren to one another—we shall have all we need to guide us through the shadows.”

What nonsense is this? That we should embrace our worthlessness? That we all share one Father? That Christ leads us after death?

Dodgson is better known by his pen name, Lewis Carroll. Under that name, he wrote “Alice In Wonderland.” A book which, not coincidentally, features the characters the March Hare and the Mad Hatter. Just what you might expect of a March Christian. At one point, the Hare and the Hatter sit with Alice at a long table with many seats.

“Have some wine,” the March Hare says.

“I don’t see any wine,” Alice remarks.

“There isn’t any,” says the March Hare.

This reminds of Christ, who stands at the table and offers his blood, but serves wine.

The people of Lovely Lane Church, who care for Mt. Olivet, seem to have embraced Jones’ and Dodgson’s words. They have a wonderful building and history, but all they want to do is share it. As if they don’t believe it’s really theirs if they keep it to themselves. They claim Christ as their own, but then want everyone else to claim him, too. They call themselves “The Mother Church” but then preach that God loves everyone equally. They say “Christ died for us.” But then they sing, “Christ is Alive!”

Yes, you may see the followers of Jesus acting in strange and confusing ways this spring. You will see them turning the other cheek, and offering blessings to those who curse them. You will see them giving cheerfully and expecting nothing in return. It is the same every year.

They are March Christians.



**Peace,**

*John Strawbridge*

**LAY LEADER**

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

### 21ST CENTURY PROJECT UPDATE

The Lovely Lane 21st Century Committee (LL21CC) and its task forces continue to meet regularly to discuss plans, designs and budgets for the following funded upgrades:

- re-design of website
- replacement of exterior church signage
- new security infrastructure within entry porticos on St. Paul and 22nd Streets

Additionally, LL21CC members will be working with architects in the weeks ahead to develop schematic plans for future capital upgrades using committed funds for upgrades in the 1930s building, gymnasium locker rooms and Brannan Chapel. Stay tuned for photos of work progress in the months ahead.

### CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The LL21CC is currently preparing a grant application to seek funding for consulting expertise to help develop tools, social media and methodologies for effective outreach and venue operations management of the upgraded space known as the **Lovely Lane Arts & Neighborhood Center (LLA&N Center)**. This grant, if awarded in June 2023, has a primary goal to leverage current staff and volunteer effort to increase public use of Lovely Lane as event and meeting venue space. Increasing building use drives diversified income streams to contribute to the church's future sustainability.

LL21CC members continue to cultivate funding opportunities with public agencies and private foundation/corporate funding sources to add to donations from individuals for these priority components. 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

No new maintenance work has been undertaken to date in 2023.

### BUILDING FUNDS DONOR UPDATE

The Lovely Lane congregation continues to be very grateful for the support received to 1) pursue our ambitious 21ST Century Project restoration, rehabilitation and building use goals 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 February 2023 Tower edition.

**The Restoration Fund** – *to maintain building integrity*

No new donations

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

Sally J. Knapp IMO Frederick P. Yoder (*correction from February 2023 Tower listing*)  
Eleanor Packard IMO Robert Furbay



*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](http://www.lovelylane.net/donation).*

All are invited to join our Lent Study, The Grace of Les Miserables, each Wednesday morning in March at 8:00 AM by zoom. Contact Rev. Debbie Scott for details ([revdeb8@aol.com](mailto:revdeb8@aol.com))

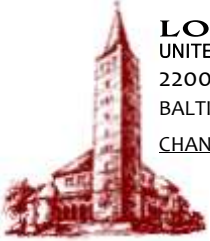
### **"Below the Surface"**

Farida Hughes and Matthew Keown

You are invited to attend an experimental, new, and inspirational performance, "Below the Surface", on Friday, March 31, from 7-9pm, in the Brannan Chapel. This entertaining evening of visual art and music means to engage you in the artistic, creative process using inspiration from both the generative and erosive power of volcanic activity and the creative forces of nature. Baltimore visual artist Farida Hughes and percussionist Matthew Keown together developed a project that blends and reflects on the musical and visual act of creation. This collaborative one-night effort showcases lightbox artwork by Hughes and a new solo percussion work composed by Keown that interacts with the visual images and creative process that Hughes experienced while creating drawings on the Mauna Kea lava fields of Hawai'i. Keown will perform his musical composition as well as other solo percussion works in which composers have represented earth's natural beauty through musical composition. Hughes' artwork will be illuminated via a programmed light show. The artists will end the presentation with a Q&A session. This free and open to the public project is supported in part by the Maryland State Arts Council (<https://www.msac.org/>).



**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

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*THANK YOU FOR PROMPT DELIVERY!*

