

THE TOWER MONTHLY

LOVELY LANE | BALTIMORE CITY STATION



Lovely Lane United Methodist Church

MOTHER CHURCH OF
AMERICAN METHODISM



2200 Saint Paul Street
Baltimore MD 21218-5805

Worship
Sundays 11:00 AM

Office Hours
Tuesday - Friday
9:00 AM — 3:00 PM

Phone
410-889-1512

Email
admin@lovelylane.net

Website
LovelyLane.net

PASTOR
Rev. Levon Sutton
revsutton@lovelylane.net

LAY LEADER
John Strawbridge

ORGANIST
Bill Scanlan Murphy

PASTOR EMERITUS
Rev. Emora Brannan

SEXTON
Ivan Reyes



From the Pastor's Desk: February Pastoral Letter

From Light to Return

Reverend Levon D. Sutton
Pastor, Lovely Lane UMC

February arrives quietly. The holidays have passed.
The new year has settled into its routines.

Winter still lingers. And in this quiet space between brightness and barrenness, the Church enters a season that whispers an ancient invitation: Return. In the Christian tradition, February often carries us from Epiphany into Lent—from the light that reveals who God is, into the honest work of remembering who we are. It is not a descent into gloom. It is an invitation into clarity. A season not of shame, but of truth. Not of punishment, but of presence.

The Scriptures speak tenderly in this season: “Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love” (Joel 2:13).

To return is not to go backward. It is to realign. It is to come home to what matters most. It is to loosen our grip on what numbs us, distracts us, or hardens us—and to recover the sacred rhythm of breathing again in God’s presence.

So much in our world presses us toward speed, noise, and exhaustion. We scroll. We react. We brace ourselves for the next headline, the next demand, the next disappointment. We are taught to measure ourselves by output and visibility, by what we accomplish and how we appear. Lent stands as a counter-witness. It invites us to slow. To listen. To remember that we are more than what we produce, purchase, or perform.

In this season, the Church dares to say something different:

You are not a machine.
You are not a headline.
You are not a commodity.
You are dust, yes—but beloved dust. Breath-filled clay. Sacred in your fragility.

At Lovely Lane, this season carries special resonance. We are a historic church still being called—still becoming. Brick and stone hold memory, but living faith holds promise. Our walls have witnessed centuries of prayer, struggle, courage, and hope. Yet every generation must ask anew: Who are we becoming now? What kind of community are we being formed to be in this time and place?

Lent is not only personal. It is communal. It asks us together:

What must we release?
What must we recover?
What kind of light is God shaping us to bear in this city, in this moment?

Perhaps we must release habits that keep us isolated.

Perhaps we must recover practices that teach us how to listen again—to God and to one another.

Perhaps we are being invited to let go of fear and rediscover courage.

Perhaps we are being called to move from preservation toward purpose.

Lent gives us permission to tell the truth—not in despair, but in hope. It creates space for confession and imagination to live side by side. We name what is broken, and we trust that God is still creating.

Whether you are a lifelong member, a recent visitor, or a neighbor who simply receives these pages, know this: you are welcome in the work of return. You do not have to have all the answers. You do not have to arrive already formed. You do not have to be certain to be sincere.

The invitation is simply to begin again.

Return to wonder.
Return to prayer.
Return to community.
Return to what is real.

February offers us a holy pause—a season not of perfection, but of presence. A season where ashes do not mark endings, but beginnings. A season where God meets us not in what we pretend to be, but in who we truly are.

May this be a month in which we breathe more deeply.

May it be a season in which we listen more carefully.

May it be a time when light does not simply shine upon us, but shapes us.

Grace and peace to you in this season of return,

Rev. Levon D. Sutton, Pastor

THE TOWER MONTHLY

From the Lay Leader...

February, 2026

Sunday mornings are devoted to ritual. Sacraments, prayers, and liturgies. Familiar routines that bring us comfort and assurance. But my Monday mornings also have a kind of ritual that I can depend on.

As it is for many people, Mondays are my day back at work after a weekend. I have emails to check, a weekly report to file, a schedule to update, a cup of coffee from the coffee machine. But before all that there is a kind of call-and-response that will be familiar to many;

“How was your weekend?”

“Fine. How about yours?”

“It was fine.”

Oftentimes, this exchange is conducted with a sense of resignation. Of boredom.

“Did you do anything fun?”

“No, just stuff around the house.”

“That’s too bad.”

What my co-workers don’t always realize is that this, for me, is a good news report. A celebration of the ordinary. I don’t need an exciting weekend – an adventure that leaves me needing more rest. A common weekend is a gift.

With the holidays well behind us, we may be forgetting the weariness that can come from so many special days in a row. From All Saints Day to Thanksgiving to Advent to Christmas to New Years... and all the weekends of decorating and shopping and wrapping and preparing... To spend a weekend in mundane activity is an answered prayer.

Our Sunday rituals are like headline news. With only one hour in front of God, we have to put the big stuff first; forgiveness from sin, healing from disease, relief from disaster, baptism, sacrifice, resurrection... events in bold and all caps.

Ironically, this is mankind’s time, not God’s. The idea of concentrating God into sixty or so concise minutes is a convenience of human’s attempt to organize the universe into our image. But while God set aside one day as a Sabbath day, God is He who created all seven days in the week. Every day is God’s day.

“This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.” [Psalm 118:24] There is no one day when we may recite this verse. Any day is a day which the Lord has made.

“One person judges one day as better than another, while another judges all days alike.” [Romans 14:5] In writing these words, the Apostle Paul was trying to free God from the prison in which we tend to put him. It is a pretty jail, made of celebration and incense, but a confining box all the same. To only honor God on Holy Days (holidays) not only denies God the fullness of His being, but denies us the opportunity to see the holiness in every day.

“Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up.” [Psalm 68:19] For many people, every day is a struggle with illness, adversity, poverty, or war. But even without these dark clouds, any of us have our daily challenges. But none of us have even a single day without God by our side. We pray to have God with us on dark and worrisome days. How amazing to know that God is no less with us in the light and carefree.

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life...” [Psalm 23:6] Not only on Holidays. Not simple on Sundays. Not even just on days when we need Him. All the days.

And so, know that I mean you the highest blessing when I wish you “Have an ordinary day!” But more than that, I pray that you will know the sacredness of each day spent devoted the small, the ordinary and the simple. God’s creation. God’s time.

Peace,
John Strawbridge
LAY LEADER



WORK TO RESTORE, REHABILITATE AND MAINTAIN OUR 19TH CENTURY BUILDING FOR GREATER COMMUNITY USE

MAINTENANCE OF BUILDING/PAST RESTORATION WORK

The Lovely Lane Restoration Fund balances will be used to repair recent roof and masonry damage in the Lovely Lane Tower at the corner of St Paul and 22nd Streets. **Contractors are scheduled to complete work by March.**

21ST CENTURY PROJECT UPDATE

Pending Capital Upgrades

The 21st Century committee continues to pursue bids for the second floor HVAC work in the classrooms and spaces above the fellowship hall. In addition, the committee is exploring security upgrades to complete in the next calendar year.

Community Outreach

In November, the sanctuary was host to Ambient Church, an immersive audio-visual experience bringing together architecturally stunning spaces with modern contemplative music. This event has caused other potential users of our space to contact the church for more information!

GIFT CAMPAIGN

As the new calendar year begins, please consider contributing to one of Lovely Lane's Building Funds. Please follow the instructions and link given below to make donations to our Building Funds.

For more information on how your tax-deductible donations will be put to work in the Restoration Fund (escrowed balances for future restoration work) or in the 21st Century Building Fund (new capital upgrades to our 19th century building for greater community use), please contact us at lovelylanecenter@gmail.com.

BUILDING FUNDS DONOR UPDATE

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

We have received the following donations since we published a listing in the **January Tower** edition.

The Restoration Fund – to maintain building integrity
The Abendroth Family Fund, IHO John M. Strawbridge
 Shatyra Hawkes
 Heidi Pratt
 Patricia Welch IMO Dorothy Krug

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

Rev. Dr. Emora and Mrs. Nancy Brannan, IMO Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Al R. Crumpler and
Mr. and Mrs. E. Oliver Brannan
Donald and Joanna Kann

*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 the memo line of the check--*

*Mail to: Lovely Lane United Methodist Church,
 2200 St. Paul Street,
 Baltimore, MD 21218*

Or go to our website to donate online:

<https://lovelylane.net/church-life/donations-offerings>

And click on either the "Restoration Fund" or the "Rehabilitation Capital Campaign Fund" button

*Scan the QR code here
 to navigate to the
 donation page*



Our Easter Altar

We invite members and friends of Lovely Lane to help decorate the Lovely Lane altar with traditional Easter plants in honor of our risen Savior. Please submit your listing using this form or by calling the church office (410-889-1512). The cost of a plant is \$15.00*

To meet printing deadlines for bulletin and newsletter listings,
please get this information to the church office by March 16, 2026

I would like to give _____ plants at \$15* per plant. I would like to contribute _____ toward additional plants.

Print Name: _____ Phone: _____ Total Enclosed: _____

Please indicate if you would like to be listed as the donor. ex: "In honor of __NAME(S), by __NAME(S)"

☐ No, do not list ☐ Yes, please list as: by _____

In ☐ honor/☐ memory of: _____

In ☐ honor/☐ memory of: _____

In ☐ honor/☐ memory of: _____

In ☐ honor/☐ memory of: _____

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*The increase from previous years is due to supply chain increases.

As always, we appreciate your generosity



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In Community

Lent

Lent, the time to prepare for Easter, is rapidly approaching. The 40 days remind us of the time of Jesus being tested in the wilderness. The 40 days of preparation have long been observed in some faiths by giving up something we enjoy during Lent. There should be time spent for prayer and meditation as part of our Easter preparation. If we decide to “give up” something, we should do so to lead us to contemplation of the meaning of Lent and Easter.

Recently, I heard a writer discussing how we are more disconnected from one another than we have ever been. Perhaps social media has become partially responsible; perhaps we suffer still from the physical separation required during Covid. We need one another in so many ways during the long, cold days of winter; we need one another as we hear disturbing news close to us and further beyond in world issues. Perhaps during Lent we could make it a practice to let one person know each day that that person matters. It only takes a moment to recognize the cashier who waits on us, a person standing in the same line we are, a friend who needs a call or card. It does not have to be a large gesture of time, effort or money; we may never know how much it means for someone to be recognized, remembered, or acknowledged. A few days ago, the DPW truck blew its horn at me, and 3 men waved. Those guys know I wave and speak to them every time I see them. The same with the mail people. Let them know you recognize they are providing a valuable service. It can go a long way when we recognize one another as part of God’s family wherever and whenever we encounter each other. We all may reap more smiles and good will even as we face great concerns.

May we have a meaningful Lent that leads us to a glorious celebration of the Resurrection on Easter Day.

SERVICE opportunities.

There are Sundays we need Fellowship hostesses. Also, there are opportunities for readers and greeters. Gifts for flowers and Tower lighting are available. All the opportunities for service bring us together as a church family. May God bless us all in our witness.

*Nancy Brannan ,
Church Council Chair*

Upcoming Events and Gatherings

Lenten Season Invitation |

February 2026

As we prepare our hearts for the season of Lent, Lovely Lane invites you to join us for several meaningful moments of worship and fellowship. On **Sunday, February 15**, we will host a pre-Shrove Tuesday fellowship hour with pancakes following worship—a time to gather, connect, and share in community as we stand on the threshold of Lent. We invite all who are able to join us in worship that Sunday.

Lent formally begins on **Wednesday, February 18**, with our Ash Wednesday service held in the sanctuary at **6:30 p.m.** This service offers a sacred opportunity for reflection, repentance, and renewal as we enter this holy season together.

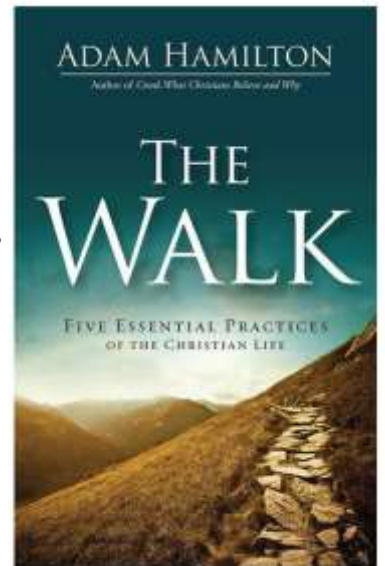


Lenten Reading & Study Invitation | Lent 2026

This Lent, you are invited to journey together through *The Walk: Five Essential Practices of the Christian Life* by Adam Hamilton. In this accessible and deeply practical book, Hamilton explores five core practices that shape a faithful Christian life: worship, prayer, service, generosity, and witness. Rather than focusing on belief alone, *The Walk* invites us to examine how our daily choices reflect our commitment to follow Jesus.

Copies of the book are available through Amazon or Cokesbury, with a limited number available in the church office.

If you would like to participate in this Lenten study, please email Rev. Sutton at revsutton@lovelylane.net.



Upcoming Events and Gatherings

Deepening Community Engagement

(6-Week Gathering | Doctoral Study)

What might change—within us and among us—if we truly listened to our neighbors and reimagined what “church” can mean in this community?

Lovely Lane United Methodist Church invites you to participate in **Deepening Community Engagement**, a six-week journey connected to Rev. Sutton’s doctoral study, *A Model for Enhancing Community Engagement*. Together we will explore faithful, practical ways the church and the surrounding community can develop meaningful approaches to engagement—grounded in listening, relationship-building, and shared responsibility for the flourishing of our neighborhood.

Gatherings will take place on Saturdays beginning February 14, from 10:00–11:30 AM. A Zoom option will be available for those unable to join in person.

For more information (and the Zoom link), contact **Rev. Sutton** at revsutton@lovelylane.net.

Deepening Community Engagement



Wesleyan Society Meeting (Class Meeting Tradition | Discipleship Gathering)

What if the next step in your spiritual growth isn’t doing more alone—but walking with others in a pattern of prayer, reflection, and encouragement?

In the Wesleyan tradition, spiritual vitality was cultivated through **society and class meetings**—small gatherings where believers practiced discipleship through honest conversation, Scripture reflection, prayer, and mutual accountability. Lovely Lane is preparing to reintroduce this tradition through a **Wesleyan Society Meeting**, designed to help participants deepen their walk with Christ in community.

These gatherings will be simple, welcoming, and spiritually grounded—creating space to check in on the life of faith, name where grace is at work, and strengthen one another for daily living and faithful witness.

Scheduling will be confirmed in the coming-weeks. Meeting times are anticipated to take place **one hour prior to Sunday worship** and will last **30 minutes**.

Stay tuned for the confirmed start date and details.

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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BALTIMORE, MD 21218-5805
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TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL
THANK YOU FOR PROMPT DELIVERY!



CALENDAR

Winter Schedule

Worship 11:00am

Fellowship Hour/Guided Tour

Fellowship Hour: Sundays following worship

Baltimore Folk Music Society

Wednesday, 7 pm Weekly dances in the Lovely Lane Fellowship Hall each Wednesday of every month.

Baltimore Lab School

Wednesday, 11th 9 am - 12:30 pm,

Fellowship Hall

Sneaker Ball, Wednesday, 13th 12:00 noon - 3:00 pm

Fellowship Hall

Winter Basketball Tuesday and Thursday, 3:30-5 pm

Gymnasium

Fun Fridays, 10 am Gymnasium

Frequency Responders Sound Therapy

Tuesday, 17th, 6:15 pm to 8:00 pm, Brannan Auditorium

Coach Tyra Basketball

Tuesday, 5:30pm 0 6:30 pm Gymnasium

Coach Richard Basketball

Saturdays, 2pm - 5 pm, Gymnasium

Lovely Lane encourages our members and friends to volunteer on the first Saturday of each month to assist with service around our expansive, beautiful, and historic church.

February Birthdays

- 3 John Ewers
- 5 Dan Gleckler
- 7 Lucy Brannan
- 8 Gregory Coates
- 9 Dan Bailey
- 10 Michael Rouse
- 16 Virginia White Green Myers
- 17 Meghan Lynch
- 18 Ivan Reyes
- 28 Carrie Harnick



(No anniversaries)