

# 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: January Pastoral Letter

### A Pastoral Letter for Advent 2025

Dear Friends and Members of the Lovely Lane Community,

As the calendar year draws to a close, we find ourselves standing at a threshold—a moment that invites reflection and hope. The turning of a year has a way of slowing us down, asking us to look back honestly and to look ahead with humility. Before we move forward, it is worth pausing to consider where we have been, what we have carried, and how God continues to meet us along the way.

Scripture reminds us, “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever*” (Hebrews 13:8). That promise steadies us. Even as seasons shift and circumstances change, God’s faithfulness remains constant. The year now closing has held moments of joy and celebration, alongside grief, fatigue, and unanswered questions. Many of us have known abundance and longing within the same season, and God has been present in all of it.

Over the course of this year, I have witnessed the strength and care that live within this community. I have seen resilience expressed in quiet faithfulness, generosity offered without recognition, and a longing for connection that runs deep. In countless ways—seen and unseen—you have carried one another, giving shape to a shared life rooted in grace.

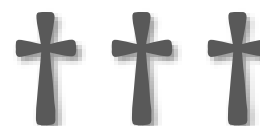
The approach of a New Year often brings expectations—new goals, fresh starts, renewed energy. Scripture offers us a deeper invitation. Through the prophet Isaiah, God declares, “*I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?*” (Isaiah 43:19). This promise affirms that God’s work continues to unfold, even in places that feel familiar, uncertain, or tender. Renewal often begins quietly, taking root before it is fully seen.

As we look toward the year ahead, my prayer is that we grow in attentiveness—listening for God’s presence among us and within us. The psalmist calls us to “*be still, and know that I am God*” (Psalm 46:10). Stillness invites trust. It creates space for God’s voice to be heard in moments of clarity and in seasons of waiting alike.

For our church community, the coming year holds meaningful opportunity. We are being invited to deepen our witness through love that is practiced, service that is faithful, and engagement that is grounded in compassion. Jesus tells us, “*You are the light of the world... let your light shine before others*” (Matthew 5:14–16). Light does not draw attention to itself; it simply reveals the way forward.

Wherever you find yourself as this year ends—full of anticipation, carrying grief, or holding both at once—know that you are not alone. God continues to walk with us, just as God has walked with us through every season before. Together, bound by grace, we step into the days ahead trusting the One who makes all things new.

**Reverend Levon D. Sutton**  
Pastor, Lovely Lane UMC



## An Invitation to Prayer

As we prepare to step into a new year, we do so carrying many things—gratitude and grief, hope and uncertainty, anticipation and weariness. Prayer offers us a way to gather all of this before God, trusting that nothing we bring is too small, too heavy, or too unfinished. With open hearts, let us place the days behind us and the days ahead in God’s care.

## A Prayer for the New Year

Gracious and faithful God,  
As one year closes and another begins,  
we pause in your presence—  
grateful for what has been  
and open to what is unfolding before us.

We thank you for moments of joy that strengthened us, for relationships that sustained us,  
and for your nearness in times of uncertainty.  
Where we are weary, grant us rest.  
Where we are anxious, offer us peace.  
Where we are grieving, surround us with comfort and hope.

As we step into a new year,  
shape us into a people rooted in faith,  
attentive in spirit, and generous in love.  
Guide this community in paths of compassion,  
courage, and justice, that we may reflect your light  
in a world longing for hope.

Lead us forward with trust—  
releasing what no longer gives life  
and embracing the promise of what you are bringing into being. We place the days ahead in your care, confident that nothing can separate us from your love.

In the name of Jesus Christ,  
who was, and is, and is to come.  
Amen.

# THE TOWER MONTHLY

*From the Lay Leader...*

**December, 2025**

An old philosophical question asks, “If a tree falls and there’s no one around does it make a sound?” Well, in the early morning hours of September 28, 2023, a tree in Northumberland, England fell... and it made a noise heard across the country.

The Sycamore Gap tree near Crag Lough was a landmark. Over one hundred-twenty years old, it was a tourist attraction and had even been featured in an icon scene in a Robin Hood movie. It was ideally positioned between two hills yet on a high ridge, and has been called the most photographed tree in England. People came to the tree to make their marriage proposals. They came to scatter their loved one’s ashes.

So it made national headlines when unknown vandals took a chainsaw to the historic tree and toppled it, leaving only a clean stump. Not only the local populace, but people around the country were outraged, and at a loss to explain why anyone would want to deliberately destroy such a perfect and beloved tree.

Almost two years later a pair of men would be convicted of the crime. But even prison time and a fine has not been enough to abate the anger and hurt many people have felt over the loss of this living history. But there is one thing that has brought hope. Nearly a year after the mighty tree fell, it was discovered that a shoot had appeared at the base of the stump. Perhaps, in time, a new tree would grow in the place where people had looked to for so long.

“A shoot will come up from the stump of  
Jesse:

from his roots a branch will bear fruit.

The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon him—  
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and might,

the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the  
Lord.”

Isaiah 11:1-2, NIV

We know Jesus Christ as the Son of God. The Savior. The Prince of Peace. Yet, at the start of his ministry on earth, he must have seemed small and fragile in comparison to his family tree – the house and lineage of David. The Empire of Rome had cut Judea to the ground. Despite the prophecy of Isaiah, could one little sapling, even an offshoot of a once-mighty tree, stand for long against so powerful a force and in such dark and hopeless times?

More than two thousand years later, we know that shoot became even bigger and stronger than the one that came before. Hope is not just a way to console ourselves when times are bleak, it is faith in the power of small things to make big changes.

As we start into a new calendar year, it is a good time to think about new growth and about hope. It is a good time – when maybe you don’t feel that times are good – to remind ourselves that hope is no small thing. It is a profound commitment. It is belief. It is light.

And now is a good time to remember that when you feel small and defenseless against a cruel and often incomprehensible world that you also are a shoot from Jesse’s stump. Christ was cut down, but did not die. God has made you from a strong and ancient root. God knows that you, too, may grow into something surprising and fresh. And from that root your branch may bear fruit. If the Spirit of the Lord rests upon you, then that fruit is Hope.

**Peace,**  
**John Strawbridge**  
**LAY LEADER**



## WORK TO RESTORE, REHABILITATE AND MAINTAIN OUR 19<sup>TH</sup> 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 plaster damage in the entry near the Lovely Lane Tower at the corner of St Paul and 22<sup>nd</sup> Streets. This work in particular represents the constant needs to repair our gaining structure. Contractors are scheduled to begin the repair work in January.

### 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY PROJECT UPDATE

#### Pending Capital Upgrades

The 21<sup>st</sup> 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. The event was sold out days before the performance and the sanctuary was standing room only the evening of the performance. Coming from all over the Mid-Atlantic, attendees experienced the richness of our space and our history first hand of being the centennial monument to American Methodism.

In December, the church hosted “A Joyful Nativity”, a Christmas cantata by Jay M. DeVaughn. Proceeds from the ticket sales benefited Manna House of Baltimore.

### 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 21<sup>st</sup> Century Building Fund (new capital upgrades to our 19<sup>th</sup> century building **for greater community use**), please contact us at [lovelylanecenter@gmail.com](mailto: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 19<sup>th</sup> Century building built as a centennial monument to the founding of Methodism in the United States in 1784 and 2) pursue our ambitious 21<sup>ST</sup> Century Project restoration, rehabilitation and building use goals.

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

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

**Maxine Stitzer and Duncan Hodge Charitable Gift Fund**

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

**Susan T. Preston Qualified Charitable Distribution**

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



# Join Our Six-Week Community Engagement Program!

Are you interested in strengthening your connection to your community and exploring ways to make a positive impact?

Lovely Lane United Methodist Church invites you to participate in a six-week interactive program designed to:

- Reflect on what community engagement means to you
- Explore ways to strengthen relationships and networks  
Identify meaningful initiatives to support your neighborhood
- Connect biblical principles to practical action



Saturdays 01/31/2026 to  
03/28/2026, 11:30am - 1:30pm



2200 St. Paul Street |  
Baltimore, MD

Contact: Levon D. Sutton  
Email: [revsutton@lovelylane.net](mailto:revsutton@lovelylane.net)  
Phone: 410.299.3994  
Sign up by: January 15, 2026

**SCAN QR CODE TO REGISTER**



Participation is voluntary, confidential, and open to adults from the church and the surrounding community.

## Details:



### **DURATION:**

6 weeks, one session per week



### **LOCATION:**

Lovely Lane United Methodist Church



### **FORMAT:**

Journals, group discussions, and  
optional individual interviews



### **PARTICIPATION:**

Voluntary, confidential, and open to  
adults from the church and the  
surrounding community.

ENACTING BELOVED COMMUNITY

A DONATION BY  
SCANNING THE  
QR CODE

**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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*THANK YOU FOR PROMPT DELIVERY!*



## CALENDAR

### Fall/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, 7th 10 am - 2:30 pm** Alumni Event,

Fellowship Hall

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

Gymnasium

**Fun Fridays, 10 am** Gymnasium

### Coach Richard Basketball

Saturdays, 2pm - 5 pm, Gymnasium

### Frequency Sounds - Sound Bath Therapy

Tuesday, December 13th

6:15 - 8:15 pm - Chapel

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.

## January

4 Martin Enos  
8 Sharra Kelly  
8 Susan Ford  
10 Marlene O'Laughlin  
14 Michael Ford  
15 Susanna Maddox  
16 Elizabeth Hines  
16 Laura Gamble

