The Tower: Volume 24, Issue 3 November, 2026

The TOWER Monthly

Lovely Lane | Baltimore City Station



Lovely Lane
United Methodist Church

Mother Church of
American Methodism

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2200 Saint Paul Street
Baltimore MD 21218-5805

Worship
Sundays 11:00 AM

Office Hours
Monday/ Tuesday
&
Thursday/ Friday
9:00 AM — 3:00 PM

Phone
410-889-1512

Email
admin@lovelylane.net

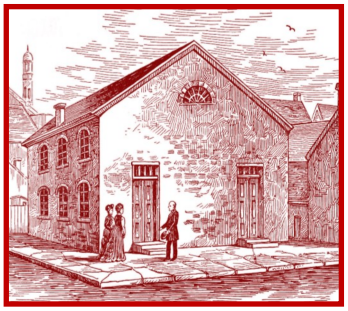
Website
LovelyLane.net

Pastor
Rev. Levon Sutton
revsutton@lovelylane.net

Lay Leader
John Strawbridge

Organist
Bill Scanlan Murphy

Pastor Emeritus
Rev. Emora Brannan



From the Pastor's Desk: *November Pastoral Letter*

Dear Lovely Lane Family,

On Saturday, October 17, I experienced something that had been more than two decades in the making. I crossed the finish line of the Baltimore Marathon, completing 26.2 miles through the streets and neighborhoods of our beloved city.

For five months, I prepared for that moment. More than 700 miles of training, countless early mornings, moments of anticipation, fatigue, and occasional uncertainty were all part of the journey. Yet, somewhere along those 26.2 miles, I was reminded that completing a marathon requires something more than physical conditioning. It requires patience, discipline, resilience, and perhaps most importantly, the willingness to continue when the road becomes difficult.

There were miles when the excitement of the moment seemed to carry me effortlessly. There were others when the hills felt longer, the distance greater, and every step required greater intention. Along the way, I came to appreciate something that seems equally true about life itself: endurance is not always about how quickly we move. Sometimes endurance is simply the quiet determination to take the next step.

As I have reflected on that experience, my thoughts have returned to the words of Hebrews 12:1–2, where we are encouraged to "run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus."

There is something profoundly reassuring about this passage. The writer does not promise that the journey will be easy, that the road will always be clear, or that ever one will travel at the same pace. Instead, we are invited into a life of faith marked by perseverance, sustained by the example of Christ and surrounded by what Scripture describes as a great cloud of witnesses. I find myself lingering over that image.

A cloud of witnesses. Those whose lives, faithfulness, sacrifices, and testimonies remind us that we are participants in a much larger story. We inherit a faith that has been carried through generations, often by people who endured circumstances far more challenging than we can fully appreciate. Their witness reminds us that perseverance is not merely an individual achievement. It is also a sacred inheritance.

Perhaps this is especially meaningful as we consider our own lives and the continuing journey of our beloved congregation. Across generations, Lovely Lane has known seasons of growth and change, celebration and uncertainty, challenge and renewal. Yet the enduring witness of the Church has never depended solely upon the strength of any one person or generation. Rather, it rests upon the faithfulness of God, who continues to call us forward.

The Apostle Paul offers another dimension to this understanding in Romans 5:3–5, where he writes that suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope. Paul concludes this remarkable progression with the assurance that hope does not disappoint us because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. What a remarkable understanding of resilience.

Paul does not suggest that suffering is desirable or that hardship should be embraced for its own sake. Neither does he dismiss the very real burdens that accompany the human experience. Instead, he points us toward the possibility that even within life's most difficult seasons, God is at work, shaping our character, deepening our capacity for compassion, and nurturing a hope that circumstances alone cannot provide. As we enter November, I suspect this is a word of encouragement many of us can receive.

Life has a way of presenting us with journeys we never anticipated. Some are filled with celebration and accomplishment. Others unfold through grief, disappointment, uncertainty, illness, or the quiet responsibilities of caring for ourselves and those we love. There are seasons when we move forward with confidence and others when the simple act of continuing requires extraordinary courage. And sometimes, the most faithful thing we can do is acknowledge that we are tired.

There is wisdom in recognizing our limitations, grace in allowing ourselves to rest, and strength in receiving the care and encouragement of others. Patience teaches us that meaningful growth takes time. Resilience reminds us that difficult moments need not define the entirety of our journey. And faith assures us that even when our strength feels insufficient, God's presence remains.

One of the most memorable aspects of running through Baltimore was the encouragement encountered along the way. Neighbors gathered along the streets. Volunteers offered water and nourishment. Strangers cheered for runners whose names they did not know. Fellow participants offered words of encouragement, sometimes at the very moments when they were needed most. Each runner had a particular journey to complete, yet no one traveled entirely alone. I cannot help but see in that experience a beautiful expression of what the Church is called to be.

We are a community of faith, entrusted with the sacred responsibility of walking alongside one another. We are called to encourage those who are weary, extend patience to those who are finding their footing, celebrate those who experience moments of joy, and offer companionship to those whose journeys have become especially difficult.

Our calling is not simply to reach a destination, but to remain attentive to one another along the way. As November draws us toward the season of Thanksgiving, I invite us to consider gratitude through this same lens. We often give thanks for the milestones we have reached, the blessings we have received, and the prayers that have been answered. Yet there is also a quieter gratitude that emerges when we reflect upon the grace that has sustained us through difficult seasons, the people who have accompanied us, and the strength we discovered when we were uncertain we had any left.

Perhaps gratitude is not only about celebrating where we have arrived, but also recognizing how faithfully God has accompanied us along the way. Some among us may be celebrating long-awaited accomplishments. Others may be navigating chapters of life for which no clear finish line is visible. Wherever you find yourself, I pray that you will remember that faithfulness is not measured solely by speed, accomplishment, or outward signs of progress. Sometimes faithfulness looks like taking another step. Sometimes it looks like allowing someone to walk beside us. And sometimes it means trusting that God remains present, even when we need to pause and rest.

May this November be a season in which we cultivate patient hearts, resilient spirits, and grateful lives. May we honor the witnesses who have gone before us, encourage those who travel beside us, and remain hopeful about the journey still unfolding. For endurance is not simply the strength to finish. It is the grace to remain faithful along the way.

A Prayer for the Journey
Gracious and loving God, we give thanks for the many ways your grace has sustained us. Through seasons of joy and difficulty, certainty and uncertainty, you have remained our faithful companion. Teach us patience when the road seems long, courage when our spirits grow weary, and humility to receive the encouragement of others. Help us become a community that extends compassion, nurtures hope, and walks faithfully together. As we enter this season of thanksgiving, open our hearts to recognize your presence in every step of the journey. In Christ's name, Amen.

With gratitude and grace,

Reverend Levon D. Sutton
Pastor, Lovely Lane UMC

THE TOWER MONTHLY

From the Lay Leader…

November 2026

A great wrong has been done.

What length would you go to for justice?

Would you confront the wrong-doer? Would you publicly shame him? Would you recruit others to your cause? Would you go to court? Would you go to war?

When the goal is right and justice, how far is far enough? How far is too far? Are there boundaries you set for yourself as an individual… as a family… as a community… as a country…

A friend of mine has a very aggressive cancer. A kind that is known to be almost undefeatable. Recently he joined an experimental trial of a new treatment. After a month he left the trial. It had made him exhausted, weak, confused, and sleepless. It made him feel so bad, that he preferred the cancer. How could his doctors let this happen? How can they know when the fighting is worse than the losing?

For centuries, physicians have relied on a set of rules – not scientific, but moral; The Hippocratic Oath. While this framework has many versions, one core principle is usually considered to be the first rule: "Do no harm." When there's no easy answer, and the choice is between two undesirable outcomes, choose not to do harm.

As Christians, and as Methodists, we sometimes like to think our faith gives us a clear moral path and conviction. But once the Sunday service ends, our lives get messy. Choices get cloudy. We want to follow blindly, because keeping our eyes open means we see that so often the choice is not between right and wrong, but between wrong and a different wrong.

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, recognized this dilemma. So he created "rules" to help guide his fledgling Methodist societies; "General Rules for a Christlike Life." And Wesley's first rule was already an already proven one; "Do no harm."

This is a surprising start, because it does not mention God, the Christ, or even faith. It is a completely mortal earth-bound rule. But in Wesley's view, there was no more Christ-like way to live, than to care for God's beloved people. And no greater way to care, than not to cause hurt, or insult, or slander, or degradation.

Wesley's second rule is related; "Do Good." Strange… why is that not the first rule? Shouldn't we, to be more like Christ, attend to doing good? Making the world better, rather than settling for just not making it worse?

No. Wesley knew that as flawed beings and willful children, we have a talent for not abiding by either rule. And it is easy for us to justify breaking the second rule; we don't have the time, the money or the strength to actively do good. But it is harder to justify breaking the first. To make excuses for doing something when we ought to NOT do something. When we don't abide by the rule to do no harm, it is because we have made a choice to do that harm.

Especially because we often forgive ourselves when we cause harm, because we believe we are serving a "greater good." But in Christ, there is no greater good than to love; God first and neighbor also.

"If anyone slaps you on the cheek, turn to them the other cheek also." (Matthew 5:39)

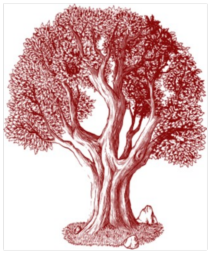
"I tell you that anyone who is angry with brother or sister will be subject to judgement." (Matthew 5:22)

It is a hard lesson – one that runs contrary to what we think we know – to see that Christ allows evil to not only exist in the world, but to sometimes win. Our challenge is not to die victorious, but to live justly. Outcomes are momentary. Living is the proof.

Every generation and community must answer for itself. We cannot deny that we live in an age that is celebrating harm. We smile at a take-down on social media. We fist-pump at the screen when someone is voted off, or their team is humiliated. We cheer when a politician, actor, or athlete is taken away in handcuffs. Or when bombs fall on bad people. Moments of harm both small and large can easily seem like a victory for "our side" and a strike in the cause of justice. But they do not reflect the life of Christ, which was sacrificed even for those who denied him, rather than allow his persecutors to come to harm.

So how far would you go? To live a Christlike life, would you have the strength to go no further?

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 have been used since January 2026 to undertake repairs to the fallen plaster in the St. Paul Street entrance vestibule. Additional investigation continues to determine if the snow and frigid temperatures of last winter has caused additional damage to the tiled roof of that corner of the church building. A roofing contractor has completed repairs in that area of the building and the ceiling will be reinstalled after water intrusion has been determined to be corrected.

21ST CENTURY PROJECT UPDATE

Pending Capital Upgrades

Viper Air, the HVAC contractor hired to complete the second-floor classroom air conditioning installation, has completed work. The small classroom now has new LED efficient lighting and a new ceiling with HVAC registers. The space is already in use with an artistic group, Ballet After Dark, as a workspace for costume design and performance rehearsals.

The committee is finalizing a security proposal for key-less entry and security alarm systems throughout the church. During this recent period of staffing transition, the committee has prioritized improved system technology to assure more secure building perimeter user-access monitoring.

Community Outreach

There continues to be interest in using the church's spaces for community and arts events after the church hosted several events at the end of last year. During the Doors Open Baltimore architectural tour event this October, the Baltimore Vocal Village group—a new building user in 2026—presented a porch concert on the steps of the church's St. Paul Street portico to
entertain both the Old Goucher community and welcome event visitors Lovely Lane.



Photo Taken by Simon Oliver

GIFT CAMPAIGN

As the calendar year draws to a close, please consider strategies to reduce your taxable income. By making a tax-deductible/tax-advantaged charitable contribution to these funds, you will support the ongoing stewardship and upgrades of our historic building.

Please follow the instructions and link given below to make donations to one or both of our Building Funds. For more information on how your tax-favored 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 **October 2026 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*
Jackalyn A. Noller

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

*Contact the church office at **410-889-1512** for additional information to donate appreciated securities or real estate to our Building Funds.*

Scan the QR code here to navigate to the donation page

In Community

"Getting to know you
Getting to know all about you…"
(Richard Rodgers & Oscar Hammerstein, II)

Perhaps you already know our quartet and Choir Master; perhaps there is more you would like to know. They are faithful in their presence and meaningful contribution to each service we share.

William Scanlan Murphy is from Glasgow, Scotland, via Manchester and the University of Oxford from which he holds an MA in Music. Bill has had quite a varied career in popular music, broadcasting and writing; he now teaches Composition and Electronic Music at Howard Community College. Bill is married to Madeleine Gray, the choir's alto. He is happy to spend his "golden years" following the astonishing Canadian career of their daughter Aisling. The Bearded Collie Lucy spends quite a bit of walking and training time with Bill beginning early in the morning. Ask Bill to show you a picture of the energetic, adorable Lucy! Bill is very rarely away from the Lovely Lane organ on Sunday mornings. What faithfulness he had throughout the long Covid lockdown.

Tamia Johnson is currently a senior in her undergraduate program at Towson University. Her major is Vocal Performance. Tamia is in vocal competitions and teaches voice lessons. In her free time, Tamia enjoys hiking. We look forward to getting to know her better.

Madeleine Gray is a professional mezzo soprano who has performed across the region and beyond. Madeleine joined Peabody Preparatory as Voice Department Chair in 2016, and in 2021 she was named recipient of the Suzanne Seff Excellence in Teaching Award. She is married to organist Bill Murphy; she spends her free time hiking and training their Bearded Collie Lucy.

Scott Hounsou has served as the faithful tenor at Lovely Lane for the past 11 years! During the week, Scott works as a fundraising manager at Washington Performing Arts, a DC-based arts organization. When Scott is not singing or performing, he enjoys running, playing Dungeons & Dragons with friends, and spending time with his wife, Grace, and their rambunctious Goldendoodle, Gumbo. In the summer of 2026, Scott co-founded Baltimore Vocal Village with his friend Krystle Fink. The group is based out of Lovely Lane UMC.

William Wilkins We will add more about William, our faithful bass, as he decides what he would like us to know. He arrives with a smile on Sunday mornings often straight from his work at St. Agnes Hospital.

We do appreciate the Choir and Choir Master/Organist and their faithful presence. Methodists are a singing denomination and music is important in our worship. Thank you each one.
November 8, 2026, Celebration of 25 years with William Scanlon Murphy
Come and join the celebration!
Please come for worship at 11:00 and join all for lunch in Lovely Lane Hall following the service. There will be a time a sharing of the congregation and friends of Bill.

Pot Luck Lunch
Please bring a dish to share:
Salad or **Vegetable** or **Main Dish** or **Fruit**

Dessert will be provided

Questions: See Nancy Brannan, Council Chair
Sefi Abedoh, SPRC Chair
John Strawbridge, Layleader

Thank you for all your support as our church family together.

Nancy Brannan, Church Council

Baltimore Vocal Village Presents: *Watch What Our Voices Can Do*
Join us on Saturday, November 14th, at 7:00 PM as Baltimore Vocal Village presents *Songbird Vocal Arts*!

The 90-minute concert includes one intermission, followed by a reception with light bites in the Fellowship Hall.

Tickets are available for purchase, with a free ticket option for those who wish to attend at no cost.

Visit baltimorevocalvillage.org to learn more and get your tickets.

We hope you'll join us for an evening of music, reflection, and community!

Poinsettias for 2026

Once more the Lovely Lane altar will be decorated with the traditional Christmas poinsettias. The cost of the plant will be $10.00. Donations of less than the cost of a single plant are also welcome, as several of these together will make it possible to purchase additional plants to beautify the Church. The cost, like any other gift to the Church, is fully tax-deductible.

Memorial and Honorary listings will be printed in both the Christmas bulletin and the January newsletter. The poinsettias decorate the altar on Sunday, December 20th, Christmas Eve and Christmas. We invite you to place your order using this form, by calling the church office (410-889-1512) or sending an e-mail to LovelyLane.BCS@gmail.com.

To meet the florist schedule and publication deadlines, please have all requests to the church office by:

Friday, December 7th.

Poinsettias for the Lovely Lane Christmas Altar

I would like to donate _____ poinsettias @ $10 per plant.

I would like to contribute $_____toward the purchase of additional plants.

In □Honor □Memory of

_____

In □Honor □Memory of _____

Signed:_____ Phone:_____ Total Enclosed: $ _____

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
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TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL
Thank you for prompt delivery!

CALENDAR

Fall Schedule
Worship 11:00am

Fellowship Hour/Guided Tour
Fellowship Hour: Sundays following worship

Ballet After Dark Fall After School Program
Thursday 6pm - 7pm & Saturdays 10am - 2pm

Baltimore Folk Music Society
Weekly Dances in Love Lane: Wednesdays at 7pm in the Fellowship Hall each Wednesday of every month.
Family Barn & Square Dance: Saturday, Nov 7th, 2PM -10PM

Baltimore Vocal Village
Tuesdays 7pm - 10pm
Songbird Vocal Arts Concert: Saturday, Nov 14th, 7PM-8:30PM

Clean Up Day
Saturday, Nov 7th, 9AM- 12PM

Coach Richard Basketball
Wednesdays, 6pm - 9pm & 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.

We the following November Birthdays:



1 Gavin O'Laughlin
2 Madeleine Gray
4 Leticia Jacobouitz
5 Lenore Baire
6 Sefi Abedoh
13 Ariel Heartstringe
17 Mieka Smart, Sally Knapp
20 Charlotte Sutton