

WITNESS

telling our stories, offering expressions of faith, being Christ-like
{Together}

OUR CALENDARS bear witness to something. To what or to whom is up to us. Looking ahead liturgically (with a bit of the civil calendar mixed in):

September 7 (Monday)	Labor Day
September 6 - 27	Season of Creation Fall begins (Wednesday the 23 rd)
September 20	Rachel preaching Homecoming Service on Eastern Shore
September 28 – October 1	Rachel vacation days
October 4	Feast of St. Francis - Blessing of the Animals details TBD World Communion Sunday
October 4 – November 1	A Season of Saints Charge Conference (10 th) Laity Sunday (18 th) Halloween (Saturday the 31 st)
November 1	All Saints Sunday
November 8	Extended Advent begins
November 22	Christ the King Sunday
November 26	Thanksgiving
November 29	Year C of the lectionary cycle begins Happy Christian New Year!
December 24 (Thursday)	Christmas Eve
December 25 (Friday)	Christmas Day
December 31 (Thursday)	New Year's Eve

Please note that the building will be closed on September 7, October 12, and November 11 for public holidays.

DISCIPLES GIVE. Monetarily, in August of 2015:

Ministry Costs	Your Gifts	Savings Transferred
12,848	8,019	5,700

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

We make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world (Matthew 28).

Boulevard United Methodist Church



Because lament is offered to one in covenant relationship, lament also is praise. It gives evidence of faith worked out in the midst of hardship, hurt, and loss. Perhaps this is the reason the editors of the Psalter labeled the book "praises" even though it is dominated by the lament genre.

Jerome Creach

August 9, 2015

321 N Boulevard
Richmond, Virginia 23220
www.boulevardumc.org

Order of Worship for 11th Sunday After Pentecost
11:00 AM

(UMH) - The United Methodist Hymnal
(TFWS) - The Faith We Sing

* Please stand, as able.

Gathering

Introit *Bread of Life, Feed My Soul*

Greeting

*Call to Worship

*Hymn *This Is the Spirit's Entry Now* 608 UMH

Prayers of the People
Joys and Concerns
Pastoral Prayer
Interlude

Proclamation and Response

Time with Children

Epistle Lesson *Ephesians 4:25—5:2*
Hymn *Help Us Accept Each Other* 560 UMH

The choir will offer vv.1-2. Please join them in singing vv.3-4. You may remain seated.

Scripture Lesson 2 Samuel 18:5-9, 15, 21-33

Sermon "Absalom Belongs" Rev. Rachel G. May

*Affirmation of Faith

Offering Tithes and Gifts

Offertory *Precious Lord, Take My Hand*

*Prayer of Thanksgiving and The Lord's Prayer (895 UMH)

Sending Forth

*Hymn *Let There Be Peace on Earth* 431 UMH

*Benediction

NURTURE

caring for one another, for our space, and for our growth as disciples

{Inward}

WE ARE PRAYING for Charlene Suter, Rob & Allison Smithson, Jane & Billy Rice, Doug Johnson's family, Terry & Ken Thompson, the Ridells, Emanuel AME Church, Colburn Dize, Anne Wilkinson, Bobbee Jo O'Hara, Robbi and Scott Hudgens, Betty Kane, Jamie and Lanier May. Here, per your request, we publish a list. Wish to add or restore a name? Say so via the offering plate.

REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS typically shape our order of service, including the sermon. If you'd like to prepare:

Next Sunday—12th Sunday after Pentecost

1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14

Psalm 111

Ephesians 5:15-20

John 6:51-58

COMMUNION DELIVERY is a real and delightful thing! If you know someone who wishes to receive the sacrament but cannot be with us in worship, please encourage him or her or a primary care-provider to contact our church office.



FLOWERS ARE GIVEN to glorify God with deep gratitude for Lauren and Aaron Bell on their second wedding anniversary.

OUTREACH

participating in ministries of compassion, justice, and advocacy

{Outward}

STOCK OUR SCHOOLS. We are receiving financial donations from now through Monday, August 10. Gifts designated for mission or marked "school supplies" will help two local primary schools equip our children. Might you accompany Mark Suter on delivery day, early in the 3rd week in August? Speak with Mark or Rachel if you'd like to share in the richness of this moment. He has room for two!



Crossing Boulevard

with Rev. Rachel

⁹ AND HE WAS LEFT HANGING 2 Samuel 18

Absalom is one of those names that you hear and sense it to be of weight; even as you wonder if it is mythological, biblical, a character from a Faulkner novel? It's the kind of name you could say in the forest and the trees would stop their swaying as if to hold their breath.

Absalom is hanging from the tangled branches of an oak tree. He is dangling.

The mule continues its gallop, for even *he* cannot bear to survey the scene. The voices of commanders and the occasional clanging of swords billow in from a distance. And in a tragic twist of this already tragically twisted tale, there is yet another blow (v.15).

Here hangs the son that David is about to mourn. Here dangles the traitor that David's most loyal servants are most pleased to have nabbed. Who Absalom is depends on whom you ask. Joab, Abishai and Ittai, would remind us he had it coming. If we could sit alongside of David in that chamber over the gate (v.33) we'd hear only the sounds of sorrow.

I am wondering if there is such a thing as a modern day David and Absalom.

Where are the hearts that break no less just because people say that the one lost was in the wrong? [I'm thinking of the grandmother wailing on Cary Street this Wednesday, children pulled to her side, apparently kin to the dead suspect.]

Where are there parents who are reckoning with the reality that their children are far-off? Where are persons entangled? Where fall tears for the entangled?

All around us and come Sunday, we'll approach Absalom for that reason.

Maybe we are only as hospitable to others in our midst as we are to the characters in sacred story. If I cannot stomach 2 Samuel 18, there may be others I am too small-spirited to hold with the courageous compassion of Christ. Can we be imitators of God (Eph. 5:1)—God who is present to this and much worse—if we buck and gallop away as did that mule? No. We cannot.

Friends, be grown in your approachability. As vessels of grace, be increased in your capacity. Come to know the likes of Absalom such that others may come to feel known by you.

2 Samuel 18:5-9, 15, 31-33

⁵The king ordered Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom." And all the people heard when the king gave orders to all the commanders concerning Absalom. ⁶So the army went out into the field against Israel; and the battle was fought in the forest of Ephraim. ⁷The men of Israel were defeated there by the servants of David, and the slaughter there was great on that day, twenty thousand men. ⁸The battle spread over the face of all the country; and the forest claimed more victims that day than the sword.

⁹Absalom happened to meet the servants of David. Absalom was riding on his mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great oak. His head caught fast in the oak, and he was left hanging between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him went on.

¹⁵And ten young men, Joab's armor-bearers, surrounded Absalom and struck him, and killed him.

³¹Then the Cushite came; and the Cushite said, "Good tidings for my lord the king! For the Lord has vindicated you this day, delivering you from the power of all who rose up against you." ³²The king said to the Cushite, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" The Cushite answered, "May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise up to do you harm, be like that young man." ³³The king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went, he said, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Ephesians 4:25-5:2

²⁵So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. ²⁶Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and do not make room for the devil. ²⁸Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. ²⁹Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. ³¹Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, ³²and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, ²and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.