

# WITNESS

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

{Together}

A SEASON OF CREATION is an opportunity to spend the month of September focused on creation-centered themes. Begun in Australia nearly two decades ago, this initiative has spread worldwide. The purpose of A Season of Creation is to enable Christians to offer their worship to God in a more "creation-connected" way than we might during other times of the Christian year.



The logic of this focused time is much the same as any other "established" season of the Christian year. By spending time in a more focused way on God's many gifts in creation, we deepen our appreciation for creation as an integral part of our worship and discipleship throughout the year and throughout our lives.

To observe this season is an act of witness. We bear witness to our belief that the skies declare the glory of God (Psalm 19), that God's handiwork helps us to know who God is (Romans 1), that nature itself participates and leads us in praise (Psalm 148 & Isaiah 55).

**BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS:** Saturday morning, October 24, 10:00 am. Save and share the date!

GIVING GROWS you and us.

	Ministry Costs	Your Gifts
August 2015	18,834	8,876

# Boulevard United Methodist Church



"It is no accident that having privatized the idea of salvation and then postponed its fulfillment to another time and place, professedly religious individuals have no difficulty abusing the earth and other people for their own ends (N. Wirzba)." Today's readings squarely confront this challenge. Jesus, the servant of creation, continues to free us to see over the walls we have erected.

Tom Mundahl,  
Lutheran Church of the Reformation

September 6, 2015

Order of Worship for 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost  
11:00 AM

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

\* Please stand, as able.

### Gathering

#### Opening Words

If it had not been the Lord who was on our side—let Israel now say—  
\*Here, the people rise to offer the words in bold print from Psalm 124.

**if it had not been the Lord who was on our side,**  
then the flood would have swept us away;  
**then over us would have gone the raging waters.**

Blessed be the Lord.

**We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowlers;**  
the snare is broken, and we have escaped.

**Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.**

\*Hymn

Insert

Prayer

Anthem

*God of Great and God of Small*

### Proclamation

Time with Children

First Lesson Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23

Epistle Reading James 2:1-10, 14-17

Gospel Lesson Mark 7:31-37

\*Hymn *Open My Eyes* 454 UMH

Sermon Rev. Rachel G. May

### Thanksgiving and Communion

An invitation to the table gives way to The Great Thanksgiving. Because Christ is our host, all people are asked to participate.

You may offer tithes and gifts as you come forward to celebrate the sacrament by intinction. Gluten-free friends receive first.

Offertory

*Give Me Jesus*

Prayer

### Sending Forth

\*Hymn

*I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me*

TFWS 2153

\*Benediction

## NURTURE

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

{Inward}



BRING A MUM TO CHURCH day is Sunday, September 13. A white or red one is preferred. The smaller size is best. [Our tree wells do not led themselves to large holes.] The churchyard loves feeling loved!

WE ARE PRAYING for Jane Frisa, Charlene Suter, incarcerated residents of metropolitan Richmond. Wish to add or restore a name? Say so via the offering plate or the church's e-mail address.

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

Next Sunday—16<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Proverbs 1:20-33

Psalm 19

James 3:1-12

Mark 8:27-38

MONDAY MORNING PRAYER: September 14. Join in prayer and lunch thereafter, if you'd like, at Westminster Canterbury (1600 Westbrook Ave.). We gather at 11:30 in the 6<sup>th</sup> floor common room. This typically happens on first Mondays. Labor Day pushes us forward this month.



## Crossing Boulevard

*with Rev. Rachel*

<sup>34</sup> **HE SIGHED AND SAID...BE OPENED.** Mark 7

I collect seashells at the shoreline. I collect seashells at the shoreline because it brings me comfort. It woos me out of a guarded posture and into crouches and furrowed brows that we are told to bury along with our childhood. I collect seashells at the shoreline because it opens me (v.34).

Sometimes a gentleman just down the beach tosses his reservation to the breeze and follows suit. Maybe he reconnects with the fact that gentle precedes man—that the meek shall inherit the earth. Or maybe I remind him of his daughter...he remembers her saying she'd like some for her city windowsill...in any case, the two of us scour.

You cannot pick up the broken ones without beholding your own jagged edges. You cannot decide that one is unfit for keeping without seeing to it that you put it back sharp side in the sand, for there are other feet. I can't, at least.

And the smooth ones, well, are they not dropped from the heart of God? To assure us of the grace that takes us on, and over time, is true as true can be to the task that is each one of us. Which of course, brings the sound of the water, rumbling, swelling, battering, withdrawing, to the forefront and I wonder how many times we fail to see things, people, forces like this water doing their work.

David joined the hunt a while ago. He made sure to tell me it was a lost cause (a scalloped one big enough to hold the others). But I caught him looking. He wanted to know if a conch would do--one like they sell outside that pirate shop further inland. I told him for \$7.95 it might. [He knew when he said it, that I'd offer a colorful no thank you. A perfect shell shellacked to shine is a lie.]

And so I'll keep at it. Thinking the guy down the beach struck gold. I'm not mad. I hope he's got a safe place inside that Chevy to carry it. I'm also thinking about how we all have it; that is, that seashell-hunt equivalent that opens us, that gets us crouching and furrowing like a fortune is on the line.

Here's the thing: One is. The treasure is being alive for goodness' sake. So don't stop hunting, friends. And don't lose your appetite for what is neither bought nor earned, but found.

### Mark 7:31-37

Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. <sup>32</sup>They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. <sup>33</sup>He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. <sup>34</sup>Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, 'Ephphatha', that is, 'Be opened.' <sup>35</sup>And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. <sup>36</sup>Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. <sup>37</sup>They were astounded beyond measure, saying, 'He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.'

## Bishop Cho calls on churches to join Sept. 6 'Day to End Racism'



Bishop Young Jin Cho has issued a call for all churches and pastors of the Virginia Conference to join our brothers and sisters in the African Methodist Episcopal Church in observing Sunday, Sept. 6, as a “Day of Confession, Repentance, Prayer and Commitment to End Racism.”

In the wake of the murders of The Emanuel Nine (the senior pastor and eight members of Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C.), the Council of Bishops of the A.M.E. Church has asked every church, temple, synagogue, mosque and place of worship to designate Sept. 6 as a Sunday “to focus on race ... and be reminded that out of one blood, God created all of us to dwell together in unity.”

“Your participation in this special call will be greatly appreciated,” Bishop Cho said.

**A**uthor of life  
Source and Creator,  
Grant a perfect rest under your tabernacle of peace  
To those whose lives were cut off by violence,  
An act of witless aggression.  
Put an end to anger, hatred and fear  
And lead us to a time when no one will suffer at the hand of another.  
May their souls be bound up in the bond of life,  
A living blessing in our midst.

God of justice and mercy,  
Remember the survivors of this attack,  
And the victims of any disaster,  
Any violence, suffering or despair.  
Grant them shelter and solace,  
Comfort and consolation,  
Blessing and renewal.  
Grant them endurance to survive,  
Strength to rebuild,  
Faith to mourn,  
Courage to heal,  
And devotion to each other.

Heavenly Guide,  
Hand of love and shelter,  
Grant the people of Mother Emanuel Your protection,  
Your wholeness and healing,  
And Your peace.