

OUTREACH

participating in ministries of compassion, justice, and advocacy

{Outward}

THE FINAL FOCUS FOR 2015 was United Methodist Family Services (UMFS). This organization identifies the unmet needs of area children and develops partnerships to provide residential treatment, specialized education, foster care, adoption services, mentoring, and more. To bring the holidays to care-receivers, UMFS depends on the generosity that flows from the likes of Boulevard. Your gifts totaled \$1,450. Wow!

WITNESS

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

{Together}

AN HOUR ON CHRISTMAS EVE could be spent many places. Consider coming to Boulevard at 10:00 am for a cross between a service of worship and fellowship. Think of it as a casual and yet holy waiting with others outside the delivery room, where Moravian sugar cake and classical guitar help us to keep the feast.

On the Cover: "Mary and Elizabeth" commissioned for the chapel of the Elizabeth House, a home for pregnant women in crisis.

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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

Boulevard United Methodist Church



- Scene 1 – John's miraculous conception
- Scene 2 – Jesus' miraculous conception
- Scene 3 – Mary visits Elizabeth
- Scene 4 – John's birth and naming
- Scene 5 – Jesus' birth and naming

Birth Stories,
Living with Jesus Now Project

December 20, 2015

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

Order of Worship

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

* Please stand, as able.

Gathering

Introit *Christmas Time's a-Comin*

Greeting

*Call to Worship UMH 199

*Hymn *My Soul Gives Glory to My God* UMH 198

Prayers of the People
Joys and Concerns
Pastoral Prayer
Interlude

Proclamation and Response

First Reading *Micah 5:2-5a*

Time with Children

Gospel Reading *Luke 1:39-45*

*Hymn *Blest Are They* TFWS 2155

Sermon *"These Two"* Rev. Rachel G. May

Offering Tithes and Gifts

Offertory *Canticle of the Turning*

*Doxology (94 UMH)

*Prayer of Thanksgiving and The Lord's Prayer

Sending Forth

*Hymn *O Come All Ye Faithful* UMH 234

*Advent Dismissal with Blessing

NURTURE

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

{Inward}

O ORIENS—Light from the east—is the fifth of the seven O Antiphons of Advent, which are traditional images that help us delve deeper into this season.

<i>O Sapientia</i>	Wisdom	November 8
<i>O Adonai</i>	Lord	November 15
<i>O Rex Gentium</i>	Ruler of nations	November 22
<i>O Radix Jesse</i>	Root of Jesse	November 29
<i>O Clavis David</i>	Key of David	December 6
<i>O Oriens</i>	Light from the east	December 13
<i>O Emmanuel</i>	God with us	December 20

Traditionally sung in Latin, today, these Antiphons are more often spoken in prayer: *O Emmanuel, our King and Lawgiver, the Expected of the nations and their Savior. Come and save us, O Lord our God.*

WE ARE PRAYING for David McConnell, Jamie and Lanier May, June Robinson, Joe Morgan and family, Jane Frisa and 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. Next Sunday:

1st Sunday after Christmas:

I Samuel 2:18-20, 26
Psalm 148
Colossians 3:12-17
Luke 2:41-52

SEEKING AN ANGEL, more specifically a flower angel. Can you give the gift of flowers for Christmas Eve? These will bring beauty to the following Sunday's service as well. Contact our main office to express interest.



Crossing Boulevard

with Rev. Rachel

⁴⁰ THE HOUSE OF ZECHARIAH Luke 1

So, this house...Part circus tent, part the holiest of holies, I'd be there in a New York minute. Zechariah: He who'd been appointed to serve the Temple and was methodically, mundanely burning incense when the news dropped (v.11). Zechariah: The one whose eyes grew as wide as saucers when Gabriel appeared to say that a child was coming. *And oh, make sure to name him John* (v.13).

Enter Mary (v.40). This is one heck of a road-trip on her part. I wonder how long it took her to get there. I wonder if Zechariah's head fell between his hands when he realized that things were only getting zanier. I wonder if anyone was thankful he couldn't say anything.

It's terrible, really, that the old man lost his voice for however many months (v.20). He did what any of us would do, which was to tell the angel that the thought of having a child at this point in their lives was crazy talk.

If you are feeling as though your household is abnormal, behold two women carrying remarkableness within them, one too young by our standards and one too old by anyone's estimate, and on the periphery, a man as befuddled as he was mute. Take heart.

Mary and Elizabeth are standing on some seriously holy ground; not only because of what happens between the two of them over the course of these three months but by virtue of what will go down after Mary leaves. In spite of overly involved neighbors and family (v.58), in spite of the fact that he has no voice, Zechariah will bang on that tablet (v.63). He will declare one frenzied fiery letter at a time that the child's name will not be Zechariah. *HIS NAME IS JOHN*.

"Everyone throughout the Judean highlands talked about what had happened (v.65)." I believe it. To borrow a Mary Oliver phrase, the way things unfold at the house of Zechariah nearly kills me with delight.

It's been said that we have to look back to appreciate the present. There is truth in that. But this is another week of me encouraging you to look *ahead* in order to come back to where we are. Let your eyes be enlivened. Get swept away by Luke. God tapped this sacred storyteller to do just that.

Micah 5

² But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,

whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labour has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.

⁴ And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth;

⁵ and he shall be the one of peace.

Luke 1

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."