

WITNESS

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

{Together}

A WORKING CALENDAR:

March 12	2 nd Sunday in Lent	Sanctuary	Baptism: Leo Gooch Harpist Eve Watters flower forms available
March 19	3 rd Sunday in Lent	Chapel	
March 26	4 th Sunday in Lent	Chapel	Singer-songwriter Amy Andrews
April 2	5 th Sunday in Lent	Sanctuary	VCU Horn Choir flower orders due
April 9	Palm Sunday	Chapel	
April 11	Interfaith Seder (ceremonial meal)	Temple Beth-El 3300 Grove Ave.	6:30 pm
April 13	Maundy Thursday	Chapel	7:00 pm
April 16	Easter Sunday	Sunrise Hollywood Cemetery	Details forthcoming
		Sanctuary	11:00 am



*The flowers are given to glorify God and with great love for Leo,
by his grandparents.*

On the Cover: Naming of the Baptist, Florence Baptistery Doors, Andrea Pisano.

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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

Boulevard United Methodist Church



A sacrament is when something holy happens. It is transparent time, time you can see through to something deep inside time.

Generally speaking, Protestants have two official sacraments (the Lord's Supper, Baptism) and Roman Catholics have these two plus five others. At such milestone moments as seeing a baby baptized or being baptized yourself, confessing your sins, getting married, dying, you are apt to catch a glimpse of the almost unbearable preciousness and mystery of life.

- Frederick Buechner

March 12, 2017

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

Order of Worship for the Second Sunday in Lent

11:00 AM

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

* Please stand, as able.

Gathering

Words of Welcome

*Call to Worship

*Hymn *Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee* UMH 89

Prayers of the People

Music *Because He Lives*

Proclamation and Response

Holy Baptism LEONARD HOLLAND GOOCH

Please join in a sung blessing to complete our sharing in The Baptismal Covenant.

Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to him belong; they are weak, but he is strong.

Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me! This I know, as he loved so long ago,
taking children on his knee, saying, "Let them come to me." (Refrain)

Jesus loves me still today, walking with me on my way,
wanting as a friend to give light and love to all who live. (Refrain)

First Reading Genesis 12:1-4a

Interlude Eve Watters, harp

*Gospel Reading John 3:1-17

*Hymn *Water and Spirit* Insert

Scripture Lesson Luke 1:57-66

Sermon Rev. Rachel G. May

*Hymn *I Was There to Hear Your Borne Cry* TFWS 2051

Offering Tithes and Gifts

Offertory

*Doxology (94 UMH)

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

Sending Forth

*Hymn *God of Abraham and Sarah* Insert
Tune: Nettleton

*Dismissal with Blessing

*Parting Music

NURTURE

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

{Inward}

WE ARE PRAYING for Grayson Foy, Merle and Laurie, Jeanette, and Jay McKinney. Wish to add or restore a name? Say so via the offering plate or the church's e-mail address.

OUR NURSERY is not staffed. However, the door to "Noah's Ark" is an open one. This space is on the first floor. Please feel free to exit and return at any point during this morning's service. We welcome infants and young children in the sanctuary. With them, we are more complete.

A LOOK AT LIFE TOGETHER in numbers.

	Ministry Costs	Your Gifts
February 2017	\$15,377	\$9,762

EVE WATTERS employs harp, folksong, and storytelling in a career that has blessed many audiences in Virginia and beyond. Eve is a Virginia Commission for the Arts Touring artist and a two-time Governor's Award for the Arts nominee. She is the University of Virginia Health System's first Musician-in-Residence. Welcome, Eve!

OUTREACH

participating in ministries of compassion, justice, and advocacy

{Outward}

MARCH IS FOR FOOD—for feeding people and for the relationship between food and faith. Our focus shifts to the work of FeedMore and a local organization



on a mission to grow healthy food, healthy communities and a healthy local food system. Take a moment to read this week's Crossing Boulevard. There, our own Beth Nelson reflects on the intersection

Scripture, her work with Tricycle Gardens, and Christian discipleship.

We will give a financial gift to those doing the hard work of feeding our neighbors and improving access to fresh food in our city. To contribute to this collection, make a check out to Boulevard and write "food" in the memo line.

* * *

GENESIS 12:1-4a

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

LUKE 1:57-66

When the time came for Elizabeth to have her child, she gave birth to a boy. Her neighbors and relatives celebrated with her because they had heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy. On the eighth day, it came time to circumcise the child. They wanted to name him Zechariah because that was his father's name. But his mother replied, "No, his name will be John."

They said to her, "None of your relatives have that name." Then they began gesturing to his father to see what he wanted to call him.

After asking for a tablet, he surprised everyone by writing, "His name is John." At that moment, Zechariah was able to speak again, and he began praising God.

All their neighbors were filled with awe, and everyone throughout the Judean highlands talked about what had happened. All who heard about this considered it carefully. They said, "What then will this child be?"



Crossing Boulevard

with Beth Nelson

9 NICODEMUS SAID TO HIM, "HOW CAN THESE THINGS BE?" John 3

“‘Want to dig in the dirt,’ says Beth”: This is the caption written on the back of a photograph of me, about two or three years old, eagerly about to plant something with my grandmother. Before you have visions of me gardening by her side throughout my childhood years, I will share that I don’t remember ever gardening or planting with her. I didn’t grow up gardening or even working in the yard. But as an adult I have not been able to stay away from it. From the moment I had a yard to tend, I have had my hands in the dirt.

After being in worship, and hearing Rachel’s sermon last Sunday about our original vocation in the Garden, I have been thinking about what it means to “serve and preserve”. In my work at Tricycle Gardens I spend a lot of time thinking about serving and preserving the earth, specifically the soil.

For the last nine months I have been doing the work of instructional design to create a Certificate in Urban Agriculture. It has looked like a lot of reading, a lot of conversations with experts in the field, a thousand or more questions, and some digging in the dirt. [But not dirt, soil!]

One of Tricycle’s partners in this endeavor is the Natural Resources Conservation Service. They have this tagline: “Unlock the Secrets of the Soil”. In John’s gospel, Nicodemus goes to Jesus to do just that—to unlock the secrets—of eternal life. Can you picture it?

One of the things I like to do is visit the Vanderbilt Divinity Library’s website, where they are works of art, hymns, poems and prayers inspired by the Scriptures. When I looked at the artwork portraying Nicodemus with Jesus, what stood out to me most was their hands. Whether open or pointed, resting or in action, they are a visual representation of their being present, of their questions and of their listening, of their work in their conversation.

It is true that for most of us the work of our hands is not in the earth. We do not put our hands into the soil of a farm in order to grow food for ourselves, our family or our community. So, then, how do we serve and preserve?

Nicodemus went to visit Jesus under cover of night because he was curious; which has me thinking about *our* work. Our work, whether it’s this month’s mission focus or next, is to be in conversation with Jesus, wanting to dig into that which we do not know or understand. Maybe we volunteer at a community garden. Maybe we invest in an urban farm. Maybe there, or elsewhere, Jesus sticks around because our questions are earnest and something locked gets unlocked. The secrets of the soil...eternal life...God’s love for this world...who knows?

John 3:1-9 (The Message)

There was a man of the Pharisee sect, Nicodemus, a prominent leader among the Jews. Late one night he visited Jesus and said, “Rabbi, we all know you’re a teacher straight from God. No one could do all the God-pointing, God-revealing acts you do if God weren’t in on it.”

Jesus said, “You’re absolutely right. Take it from me: Unless a person is born from above, it’s not possible to see what I’m pointing to—to God’s kingdom.”

“How can anyone,” said Nicodemus, “be born who has already been born and grown up? You can’t re-enter your mother’s womb and be born again. What are you saying with this ‘born-from-above’ talk?”

Jesus said, “You’re not listening. Let me say it again. Unless a person submits to this original creation—the ‘wind-hovering-over-the-water’ creation, the invisible moving the visible, a baptism into a new life—it’s not possible to enter God’s kingdom. When you look at a baby, it’s just that: a body you can look at and touch. But the person who takes shape within is formed by something you can’t see and touch—the Spirit—and becomes a living spirit.

“So don’t be so surprised when I tell you that you have to be ‘born from above’—out of this world, so to speak. You know well enough how the wind blows this way and that. You hear it rustling through the trees, but you have no idea where it comes from or where it’s headed next. That’s the way it is with everyone ‘born from above’ by the wind of God, the Spirit of God.”

Nicodemus asked, “What do you mean by this? How does this happen?”