

Boulevard United Methodist Church



“The function of narrative is not to describe but to call forth a response from its hearers.”

- Dennis Bratcher

March 26, 2017

On the Cover: “Healing Eyes” Project – CODAworx - Yorgos Papadopoulos

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
We make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world (Matthew 28).

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

Order of Worship for the Fourth Sunday in Lent

11:00 AM

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

* Please stand, as able.

Gathering

Music

Greeting

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

The creator of heaven and earth.

Psalm Prayer Ps. 23, adapt. By Lucien Deiss

Blessed are you, Lord Jesus, Good Shepherd of your Church!

In our baptism you anointed us with the oil of salvation,

And in the Eucharist you spread before us the table of your heavenly bread.

Lead us by your goodness and kindness through the dark valley of death

To the day that we will dwell forever in the house of the Lord. **Amen.**

*Hymn *How Lovely* TFWS 2042

Words of Welcome

Prayers of the People

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

Interlude Amy Andrews

Proclamation and Response

Children's Moment

Music

Gospel Lesson John 9:1-41

Sermon "The Stories We Skip" Rev. Rachel G. May

*Hymn *Amazing Grace* UMH 378

Offering Tithes and Gifts

Offertory

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

Sending Forth

*Hymn *Be Thou My Vision* UMH 451

*Dismissal with Blessing

*Parting Music

NURTURE

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

{Inward}

WE ARE PRAYING for Kimberly Gwynn, 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.

AMY ANDREWS is a gifted singer-songwriter for whom Baltimore is home. Her sound has been described as "the perfect marriage of Alison Krauss purity and Patty Griffin soul." Ever the traveling musician, her calendar is full of performances. We are the lucky ones, this morning. Welcome, Amy!

A LOOK AT LIFE TOGETHER in numbers.

	Ministry Costs	Your Gifts
March 1 - 13	\$7,232	\$3,113

Easter Flowers

A two-fold invitation:

- (1) To provide flowers for Boulevard's sanctuary on Easter morning and
- (2) To support our worship fund.

Prices below are therefore slightly higher than cost.
If making more than one contribution, use another form.

Your Name:

Attached is payment for—or, expect payment from me between now and April 3 for:



- Potted Lily at \$14.00 each
- Potted Hydrangea at \$20.00 each
- The Worship Fund (no flowers) \$15.00

REMEMBERING:



CELEBRATING:

- I wish to dedicate these anonymously.
- I wish for them to be dedicated by:

If you wish to support our worship services, but do not want to receive actual flowers, your gift to Boulevard UMC will be acknowledged in the bulletin accordingly. If you wish for another to receive the flowers that you purchase, please make those arrangements independently. Thank-you!



Crossing Boulevard

with Rev. Rachel

³⁹ **HAVING FOUND HIM** John 9

There was a rhythm to his old life. He woke up. He traveled to the temple. He lowered himself down into his spot. He begged.

If he had known that gaining sight would shove him into the harsh limelight and put him on the spot in the way that it did, might he have said to Jesus, *no thank you?*

One of several problems with that line of thinking is the source. It comes from a place of always having had physical vision. [What do I know?]

People lost their dang minds over it, though, to the point where you wish for the man at least the option to go back in time. Neighborhood folk, church folk, the authorities, his parents...their mouths were all moving a mile a minute. If ever we forget that God working out God's plans amidst God's people tends to upset something or somebody, well, here it is in plain view.

It's not that "we don't like change". It's that we don't like the change that we don't get to pick. Even when the current reality is as ugly as presuming that a blind man or his family is to blame for his blindness, we humans may pick a fight to protect that current reality. We don't want our own efforts, oriented around things as they are, to have been in vain.

Jesus isn't overly worried about the people who feel like their views are under siege; at least not in this text. He has his eye on the one sheep (Luke 15). He is going to make sure that the man born blind *feels found* at the end of this thing.

When, in the tenth chapter, the good shepherd stuff surfaces, Jesus has already enacted the role. The man, who gains sight but loses a place of belonging, belongs anew. He has been scooped up and offered alternative fellowship.

"Jesus provides for the man born blind much more than sight—he provides for him what he, as the good shepherd, gives all of his sheep—the protection of his fold, the blessing of needed pasture, and the gift of abundant life." Those are Karoline Lewis's words. For you, for me, for Boulevard, I wish a glimpse of all three.

We too are gonna feel found at the end of this thing. Like Patel in the movie *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* says: "Everything will be all right in the end. If it's not all right, it is not yet the end."

John 9:1-41

1	And as [Jesus] was going along, he saw a person who was blind from birth.
2	And his students asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned so that he might be born blind? Was it this one or his parents?”
3	Jesus answered, “Neither this one nor his parents sinned. Rather so that the works of God might be made visible by means of him.”
4	“It is necessary for us to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. The night is coming when no one is able to work.”
5	“While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”
6	Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud from the spit and anointed his eyes with the mud.
7	And he said to him, “Go, bathe in the pool of Siloam (which is translated “the one being sent out”). Thus, he went out and bathed... and he came to see.
8	Now the neighbors and the ones observing him formerly, when he was a beggar, were saying, “Is not this the one who was sitting and begging?”
9	Some were saying, “This is the one!” Others were saying, “No, but he is like him.” That one, he was saying, “I am!”
10	Now they were saying to him, “How were your eyes opened?”
11	That one answered, “The person called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go out into Siloam and bathe.’ Thus, I went out and bathed and received sight.”
12	And they said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I don’t know.”
13	They led the one formerly blind to the Pharisees.
14	And it was during the day on the Sabbath when Jesus made mud and opened his eyes.
15	Now the Pharisees also asked him how he received sight. And he said to them, “He placed mud on my eyes and I bathed and I see.”
16	Now some of the Pharisees were saying, “This person is not from God, for he did not keep the Sabbath.” Others were saying, “How could a sinful person do these signs?” And there was division among them.
17	Then they were saying to the blind person again, “What do you say about him, since he opened your eyes?” And he said, “That he is a prophet.”
18	Now the Judeans did not believe that he was blind and received sight, therefore they called the parents of the one who received sight.
19	And they asked them, saying, “Is this your son, the one you say was born blind? How then does he see now?”
20	His parents answered and they said, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind.

21	How he now sees we do not know, or what opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him, he is of age. He will tell you about himself.”
22	His parents said this because they feared the Judeans. For the Judeans already agreed that if anyone praised Christ, he would be out of the synagogue.
23	On account of this, his parents said, “He is of age, ask him.”
24	So they called the person who was blind out a second time and said to him, “Give glory to God. We know that this person is sinful.”
25	Now that one answered, “I don’t know if he is sinful. I know one thing – I was blind, and now I see.”
26	They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”
27	He answered them, “I told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? It can’t be that you also want to become his students, can it?”
28	And they scoffed at him and said, “You are a student of that one. We are students of Moses.
29	We know that God spoke to Moses, we do not know where this one is from.”
30	The person answered and said to them, “Well, this is a wonder! You don’t know where he is from, and he opened my eyes.
31	We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he listens to those who are pious or do his will.
32	In all the ages, it has not been heard that the eyes of one born blind were opened.
33	If this one were not from God, he would not be able to do anything.”
34	They answered and said to him, “You were born completely in sin, and you are teaching us?” And they threw him out.
35a	Jesus heard that they threw him out. Having found him,
35b	He said, “Do you believe in the human one?”
36	That one answered and said, “And who is he, sir, so that I may believe in him?”
37	Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is that one.”
38	And he replied, “Sir!” And he bowed down before him.
39	And Jesus said to him, “Because of judgment I came into this world, so that the ones not seeing might see, and the seeing might become blind.”
40	Some of the Pharisees, the ones being with him, heard, and said to him, “Surely we are not blind.”
41	Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin, but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

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 local organizations on a mission to grow healthy food, healthy communities and a healthy local food system. 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.



WITNESS

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

{Together}

A WORKING CALENDAR:

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