

OUTREACH

participating in ministries of compassion, justice, and advocacy

{Outward}

JULY AND EARLY AUGUST is for school supplies. Gifts designated for mission or marked "school supplies" will help two local primary schools equip our children.



Why do we collect money rather than ask you to shop?

Doing it this way allows administrators and teachers to tell us what they need and for Boulevard to plan our buying and distributing accordingly.

Boulevard United Methodist Church



"Reading this Genesis narrative feels like walking into a county court house and sifting through a musty box of birth, marriage and death certificates, not to mention public records of lawsuits born of family pathology and resentful letters never meant to be read by others. But such are the places and manner of our redemption."

- Daniel B. Clendenin

On the cover: *The birth of Jacob and Esau - Ratner museum*

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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

July 16, 2017

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

Order of Worship for the 6th Sunday after Pentecost

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

* Please stand, as able.

Gathering

Music

Wonderful Words of Life
Thy Word Is a Lamp

Greeting

The risen, living Christ calls us by our name;
comes to the loneliness within us;
heals that which is wounded within us;
comforts that which grieves within us;
releases us from that which has dominion over us;
cleanses us of that which does not belong to us;
renews that which feels drained within us;
awakens that which is asleep in us;
names that which is still formless within us;
empowers that which is newborn within us;
consecrates and guides that which is strong within us;
restores us to this world which needs us;
reaches out in endless love to others through us.

The risen, living Christ calls us by our name.

F.S. Wuellner, Upper Room Books

Words of Welcome

*Hymn

O Blessed Spring

TFWS 2076

Prayers of the People

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

Duet

Highland Cathedral

Jennifer Johnson, violin

Proclamation and Response

Children's Moment

First Reading

Genesis 25:19-34

Gospel Reading

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Sermon

Rev. Rachel G. May

*Hymn

Insert

Offering Tithes and Gifts

Offertory

*Doxology (94 UMH)

*Prayer of Thanksgiving and The Lord's Prayer

Sending Forth

*Hymn

Let There Be Peace on Earth

UMH 431

*Dismissal with Blessing

*Parting Music

NURTURE

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

{Inward}

WE ARE PRAYING for Wayne, Ben Hamrick, the family of Yolanda Williams, Rusty Moellencamp, Mary Anderson and her new to the family son, the friends and family of David McConnell, Colleen Bouldin, Kimberly Gwynn, Merle and Laurie. 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

\$2,476

Your Gifts

\$3,940

July 1-10



Crossing Boulevard

with Rev. Rachel

6 THEY WERE SCORCHED - Matthew 13

It was the second time I planted grass that I realized I had a rock problem.

A drunk driver took out the first crop. Before that, someone made off with the stepping-stones that had been installed in that area. [Who does that? Who digs up other people's hardscapes?]

So, I aerated the second time. I was forced into this do-over. Might as well. In several places, my nifty yellow tool would only go so far down; at which point the earth made an unusual sound. More stones! They were older than those that had been unlawfully lifted. Time, water, and foot-traffic had buried these a long time ago.

With a little help from my neighbor, I dug *to* them and then *around* them, so as to lift them up and out. The grass would be happier that way. After lugging five or six pieces of slate to my patio, I called it a day. I remember asking myself if I should try to dig up this one particular area where there were (maybe?) another couple of stones. *Nope*, I decided. *If there were any more, they were down in there pretty good.*

The grass seed had six to eight inches of quality soil. It would be fine. It was fine. It was fine until the sun flexed its early summer strength. Then came the patches. I had planted appropriate seed. I had watered well. What could possibly be the matter?

Some depth of soil, it turns out, may not be enough.

“Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away (v.5).”

In the past, when I read that or when this part of the parable was read to me, rocky ground was rocky ground—ground comprised of rocks. I had not yet bumped up against the possibility that rocks many inches below good soil could give rise to the same troubling outcome; namely, scorching, withering.

You or I may be offering God a layer of good soil. This does not cancel out the rocks within and among us. The rocks will get in the way of real, sustainable growth (v.23). Which is why we deal with them (the rocks). Therapy, meditation, showing up to worship, bookending our days with prayer, digging after we're through with digging...this is how.

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea.²Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach.³And he told them many things in parables, saying: “Listen! A sower went out to sow.⁴And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up.⁵Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil.⁶But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away.⁷Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them.⁸Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.⁹Let anyone with ears listen!”¹⁸“Hear then the parable of the sower.¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path.²⁰As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;²¹yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away.²²As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing.²³But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

Genesis 25:19-34

¹⁹These are the descendants of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham was the father of Isaac, ²⁰and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, sister of Laban the Aramean. ²¹Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord granted his prayer, and his wife Rebekah conceived. ²²The children struggled together within her; and she said, "If it is to be this way, why do I live?" So she went to inquire of the Lord. ²³And the Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples born of you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger." ²⁴When her time to give birth was at hand, there were twins in her womb. ²⁵The first came out red, all his body like a hairy mantle; so they named him Esau. ²⁶Afterward his brother came out, with his hand gripping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them. ²⁷When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, living in tents. ²⁸Isaac loved Esau, because he was fond of game; but Rebekah loved Jacob.

²⁹Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was famished. ³⁰Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red stuff, for I am famished!" (Therefore he was called Edom.) ³¹Jacob said, "First sell me your birthright." ³²Esau said, "I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?" ³³Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. ³⁴Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank, and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.