

NURTURE

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

{Inward}

WE ARE PRAYING for Aunt Lou, Jim Rickards, Jerry Porter, Grayson Foy, Richard Weeks, Wayne, and Ben Hamrick. Wish to add or restore a name? Say so via the offering plate or the church's e-mail address.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH is up and running! Ms. LaRonda is among us. She's a favorite among students over at Grace Covenant's preschool. After children's moment (approximately 4:15) guardians are invited to accompany infants - 5 year olds to the end of the hallway. They rejoin us for Communion.

AS YEAREND APPROACHES, kindly remember that you can make a gift (of stock, mutual funds, etc.) to Boulevard UMC and:

- avoid all broker commissions/fees as well as capital gains taxes
- take the full market value of the security as a 2017 tax donation
- possibly satisfy your 2017 RMD if you are over age 70½
- support our faith family with the full market value of the security(s).

You may also fulfill some or all of your planned giving for 2018 and record it as a 2017 deduction. Questions? Call Ted Soto of the Virginia United Methodist Foundation at 804-521-1122.

OUTREACH

participating in ministries of compassion, justice, and advocacy

{Outward}

MID-NOVEMBER TO MID-DECEMBER'S FOCUS is United Methodist Family Services. We help them put hope into the holidays for children and families in Virginia. Making a check out to Boulevard UMC and designating it UMFS is the way that we ask you to contribute. You can also give online by clicking on the mission option. For them, it's not "just money". Money fuels their ministry, which we have the privilege of supporting.

On the Cover: Byzantine icon, Archangel Gabriel.

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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

Boulevard United Methodist Church



Praising God is often connected with *who God is or what God has done*, with that which already exists or has occurred. Blessing, on the other hand, is more flexible -- people can bless each other, God can bless people or things, and people can bless God.

And unlike praise, blessing often takes place *before* something happens or comes into being.

- K. Suomala

December 3, 2017

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1st Sunday in Advent

4:00 pm

Gathering		
Greeting		Rev. Drew Willson
Call to Prayer & Praise	Canticle of Zechariah	Insert
Hymn	<i>People Look East</i>	
Prayer		
Time with Children		
Music		
Scripture	Luke 1:5-25	
Music	<i>Blessed Be the God of Israel</i>	
Scripture	Luke 1:57-66	
Sermon		Rev. Rachel G. May
Hymn	<i>O Come O Come Emmanuel</i>	
Offering Tithes & Gifts		
The Lord's Supper		
Hymn	<i>Come Thou Long Expected Jesus</i>	
Dismissal with Blessing		



INVITATION TO THE LORD'S SUPPER

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Holy God...

**Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory,**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

In the fullness of time, you sent Jesus...

And so,

in remembrance of these, your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving

as a holy and living sacrifice,

in union with Christ's offering for us,

as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Pour out your Spirit on us, and pour out your Spirit on these gifts...

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy Name.

Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

BREAKING THE BREAD

GIVING THE BREAD AND THE CUP

PRAYER



Crossing Boulevard

with Rev. Rachel

⁷² **FREE TO WORSHIP WITHOUT FEAR** - Luke 1

Art tends to portray them as facing away (the wing shot) or sideways (the trumpet pose) or as busy, finely robed figures in the heavenly court. Angels never look you in the eye.

Which is why this image of this particular angel seems important. It asks us to consider a real encounter with these beings that either are or are not more than characters in ancient stories or statues in our gardens and cemeteries.

Gabriel was no decoration atop a mantle. He was dispatched on a number of occasions with real responsibilities. I especially treasure the story of his errand involving Zechariah. It has more of something (is it spunk?) than other exchanges between angels and humans recorded in the Bible.

I wonder if John the Baptist's father believed in making eye contact with angels prior to one showing up and upending his life. Or if angels bearing God's good news waltzed in not really caring whether Zechariah, Mary, and Joseph believed in them. My money is on the latter.

Gabriel, after all, doesn't come across as needing much in the way of affirmation. He means to do his duty and perhaps for that reason is unenthused by Zechariah's request for a sign. We might think it is God who causes Zechariah to lose his voice for a spell. Arguably, this is Gabriel's doing (v.20).

The oft-cited connection between angels the words *do not be afraid*... This too is on my spiritual radar. Angels may in fact be scary-looking. What do I know? But I don't think that is our take away.

If God's people are free to worship without fear by virtue of the birth of John (v.72), this raises the question of what it meant to worship with fear. Put another way, Zechariah's celebration of fear being lifted points out that fear had in fact covered the land.

When we hear the angels say *do not fear*, may I suggest that we refrain from assuming that the fear is akin to seeing a ghost? If we can tap into Zechariah, Mary, and Joseph's actual fears, we can more fully access the grace—the grace that finds them and now searches for us.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH {Luke 1:68-79}

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
who has come to set the chosen people free.

**The Lord has raised up for us
a mighty Savior from the house of David.**

Through the holy prophets, God promised of old to
save us from our enemies,

from the hands of all who hate us;

**to show mercy to our forebears
and to remember the holy covenant.**

This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham:

**to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
free to worship without fear,
holy and righteous in the Lord's sight,
all the days of our life.**

And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way,

**to give God's people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of their sins.**

In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

**to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.**