

NURTURE

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

{Inward}

CHILDREN'S CHURCH happens a little differently today. Ms. LaRonda is ready to receive infants – 5 year olds at any time (upon arrival, if that suits). Parents may bring little ones back into the main gathering as Moravian Sugar Cake is being served.

WE ARE PRAYING for Abby, Mitchell, loved ones of Aunt Lou, Colleen Bouldin, 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.

A LOOK AT LIFE TOGETHER in numbers.

	Ministry Costs	Your Gifts
December 1 - 20	\$9,752	\$10,205

OUTREACH

participating in ministries of compassion, justice, and advocacy

{Outward}

THANK YOU for your continued commitment to congregational generosity. Our collection for United Methodist Family Services totaled \$1623.

Boulevard United Methodist Church



“How can Christmas as a Celebration of Disruption get through our celebration of coziness? What cycles of ours does God want to break into, break us out of, so that we bring to birth whatever it is God needs in our case?”

- Brian McGowan

December 24, 2017

boulevardumc@gmail.com
PO Box 14507 Richmond, VA 23221
www.boulevardumc.org

Christmas Eve
4:00 pm

Gathering Music

Seat yourselves around a table. Greet one another. Make room for a latecomer.

Prayer

Holy God, heaven and earth will soon meet
in an infant.

We are waiting for what heaven is birthing
for in this child you come to be close to us.

We give thanks
for prospects of peace in the world...
for confidence in your almighty love...
for those who generously give..
for those who graciously receive...

God of all mercy,
as you will come in Jesus to be our guest,
inspire our hearts to a hospitality
that welcomes all who are without shelter or status.

Especially we pray
for the sick and suffering...
for those who know no laughter, only tears...
for those who govern and rule...
for those in prison...
for the Church as a means of grace and deliverance...

This we pray in the name of the Christ Child, for whom we have come,
with all that we have and all that we are. Amen.

The Light

“Silent Night” is offered. Allow another to light your candle.

The Word

Luke 2:1-7

Hymn

“O Come All Ye Faithful”

An Invitation

Rev. Rachel G. May

Bread for the Journey

*A Shared Reading
Moravian Sugar Cake*

Forth in Good Cheer

*Blessing
Holy Lingerin*

SILENT NIGHT

Silent night, holy night,
all is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin
mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night,
shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light;
radiant beams from thy holy face
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL

O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him, born the King of angels;

O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;
(Refrain)

See how the shepherds, summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;
we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps;
(Refrain)

Child, for us sinners poor and in the manger,
we would embrace thee with love and awe.
Who would not love thee, loving us so dearly?
(Refrain)

Luke 2:1-12

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”

About Moravian Sugar Cakes

Winston-Salem, North Carolina is home to a large Moravian population. Dewey’s Bakery made the first round of sugar cakes shared here on a Christmas Eve morning. That was four years ago. This morning’s cakes have been home-baked, using a traditional Moravian recipe.

Founder of the Methodist movement, John Wesley, deeply admired the ways in which the German Moravians practiced their faith. He was especially moved by a service he attended in Georgia that has come to be called a Love Feast.

The Love Feast is like Holy Communion, except that it tends to be less formal and closer to an actual meal. It is therefore held around tables or with persons seated in a circle. The food is served as a part of the service. It is sometimes followed by a full meal. When there is food left over, it has been taken and given as an expression of love to persons not present.

Gifts

Your cash and checks will be directed to our General Fund and will help Boulevard give a Christmas gift to each person on the congregation’s payroll.



Crossing Boulevard

with Rev. Rachel

⁶ **THE TIME CAME** - Luke 2

No one wants to go into labor in the middle of a trip they had no choice but to take; no one that I know, at least.

This is precisely what happened. While these two are still working through the timing of the pregnancy itself, the Emperor decides he needs a head count. So, “All went to their own (home) towns to be registered.”

These are the circumstances amidst which Mary goes into labor. It’s not all magic and perhaps much of the magic comes with hindsight and with the fact that you and I didn’t actually live it.

The time came, Luke tells us. I can’t help but read into that, *the poor timing just would not let up.*

The problem with the popular expression “timing is everything” is that it leads us to associate good things with timing that feels good to us. This might be me suggesting that some figures of speech are worth using sparingly. Mostly, I am wondering how I, for one, manage to fall out of touch with the disruptive quality of Christmas.

I think a felt sense of the upsetting pieces of the story matter. Let me say it this way: Sanitized of the disruptive elements, the birth of Jesus can only save the parts of lives and our life together that are, in our estimate, timed well...happening when and at the pace we prefer.

Friends, I am tired in a way that I have not been in a long while. I don’t want a cookie or even a gold star on my chart. But I do want to be honest: I never thought that moving a church from 30,000 square feet to 300 square feet would be part of it. I certainly never thought it would happen during the month of December.

The time came, though. It came unapologetically. While I teetered between resolve and despair and while I debated whether it was the bravest or silliest move of my ministry, I think I heard the borning cry of the One whose parents’ testimony, like the poor timing, just won’t quit.

Because the route is cluttered, things get overturned. There is upset. But God gets to the world, God gets to us, and God will get to you. At which point the wreckage will be revealed as not wreckage after all... ’twas and ’tis the trail of disruptive, healing, amazing grace.