

MARY POPPINS RETURNS and on purely social note, you and yours are invited to Movieland at Richmond Square for a 11:40 am showing on December 26. Tell Rachel if you plan to come, so that she can try to save you a seat!

Boulevard United Methodist Church



Scene 1 – John's miraculous conception

Scene 2 – Jesus' miraculous conception

Scene 3 – Mary visits Elizabeth

Scene 4 – John's birth and naming

Scene 5 – Jesus' birth and naming

Birth Stories,
Living with Jesus Now Project

December 23, 2018

THE VIRGINIA CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
✦ *where disciples are lifelong learners influencing others to serve* ✦

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Fourth Sunday in Advent
4:00 pm at 1837 W Broad St.

Greeting Rev. Drew Willson

Opening Words

O God in our midst, Emmanuel, in you our salvation comes to earth:
Come rule our lives and make us whole: **Come and save us!**

Hymn

Time with Children

Joys & Concerns

Prayer

*O Come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

Scripture Luke 1:39-45

Music

Scripture Luke 1:47-55 199

Sermon Rev. Rachel G. May

Hymn

Offering

Doxology

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

The Lord's Supper

Hymn *O Come All Ye Faithful* vv. 1-3 234

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



Storefront Inklings

with Rev. Rachel

THE HOUSE OF ZECHARIAH Luke 1:40

So, this house...Part circus tent, part the holiest of holies, I'd be there in a New York minute. Zechariah: He who'd been appointed to serve the Temple and was methodically, mundanely burning incense when the news dropped (v.11). Zechariah: The one whose eyes grew as wide as saucers when Gabriel appeared to say that a child was coming. *And oh, make sure to name him John* (v.13).

Enter Mary (v.40). This is one heck of a road-trip on her part. I wonder how long it took her to get there. I wonder if Zechariah's head fell between his hands when he realized that things were only getting zanier. I wonder if anyone was thankful he couldn't say anything.

It's terrible, really, that the old man lost his voice for however many months (v.20). He did what any of us would do, which was to tell the angel that the thought of having a child at this point in their lives was crazy talk.

If you are feeling as though your household is abnormal, behold two women carrying remarkableness within them, one too young by our standards and one too old by anyone's estimate, and on the periphery, a man as befuddled as he was mute. Take heart.

Mary and Elizabeth are standing on some seriously holy ground; not only because of what happens between the two of them over the course of these three months but by virtue of what will go down after Mary leaves. In spite of overly involved neighbors and family (v.58), in spite of the fact that he has no voice, Zechariah will bang on that tablet (v.63). He will declare one frenzied fiery letter at a time that the child's name will not be Zechariah. *HIS NAME IS JOHN.*

"Everyone throughout the Judean highlands talked about what had happened (v.65)." I believe it. To borrow a Mary Oliver phrase, the way things unfold at the house of Zechariah nearly kills me with delight.

It's been said that we have to look back to appreciate the present. Fair enough. This may be *me* wanting *us* to look through the windows into the house of Zechariah so as to revel in the moment. Let yourself go to the hill country of Judea. Get swept away by Luke. God tapped this sacred storyteller to do just that.

Luke 1

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

NURTURE

caring for one another and for our growth as disciples

{Inward}

WE ARE PRAYING for Jim and his family, Nancy Tate, and Leslie. Wish to add or restore a name? Say so via the offering plate or the church's e-mail address.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH for infants - 5 year olds begins after the children's moment (approximately 4:15). They rejoin us for Communion. Ms. LaRonda is an experienced childcare provider currently employed by Grace Covenant Child Development Center.

O EMMANUEL is the seventh of the seven O Antiphons, which are traditional names for the Messiah whom Christians believe has come (and continues to come and will come again) in Jesus. For a sense of how these have shaped our Advent journey, see page 211 in the red hymnal.

OUTREACH

participating in ministries of compassion, justice, and advocacy

{Outward}

GLORY, HALLELUJAH! in response to your continued commitment to congregational generosity. Our collection for United Methodist Family Services totals over \$1700. This is up several hundred dollars from last year and so sweet to behold. We will deliver the check this coming week.

WITNESS

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

{Together}

AN HOUR ON CHRISTMAS EVE could be spent many places. Consider coming here at 10:30 am for a cross between a service of worship and fellowship. Think of it as a casual yet holy waiting with others outside the delivery room. Moravian sugar cake and singing help us to keep the feast.