


Boulevard United Methodist Church

March 11	4 th Sunday in Lent		
March 18	5 th Sunday in Lent	Flower orders due	
March 25	Liturgy of the Palms Liturgy of the Passion		
March 29	Maundy Thursday	The Pace Center Sanctuary 700 W. Franklin St.	6:30 pm childcare provided
April 1	Easter Sunday	Hollywood Cemetery Sunrise Service  Fox Elementary Service	7:00 am 4:00 pm



"Do not domesticate the Johannine Jesus. It is his style to say things that border on the offensive, be puzzled and even offended; but do not silence this Jesus by deciding what he should not have said and what your hearers should not hear."

- Raymond Brown

March 11, 2018

On the Cover: The Cross-Shaped Bronze Serpent at Mount Nebo, Jordan.

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

boulevardumc@gmail.com
PO Box 14507 Richmond, VA 23221
(804) 840-1921

4th Sunday in Lent
4:00 pm at Fox Elementary

Greeting

Call to Prayer & Praise *based on Psalm 107:1-3*

Give thanks to the Lord, for the Lord is good.

God's steadfast love endures forever!

Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.

All the people of the land, from the east to the west, from the north to the south,

We will praise God's holy name!

Hymn *How Can I Keep From Singing*

Prayer

The Peace

Time with Children

Music

Scripture John 3:1-9

Music

Scripture John 3:10-21

Sermon "Bigger Than Us" Rev. Rachel G. May

Hymn *Wash O God, Your Sons and Daughters*

Offering Tithes & Gifts

Prayer

The Lord's Supper

Prayer

Hymn *What Wondrous Love Is This*

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

⁴ **A SECOND TIME** John 3

Nicodemus is ready to hear any number of things; with the exception, perhaps, of Jesus' recommendation that those who wish to see the kingdom of God re-enter the womb (v.3).

Who said anything about wanting to see the kingdom? Nicodemus had only gotten as far as saying that God was clearly with Jesus. If the suggestion was that he, Nicodemus, needed to take a second trip through the birth canal, well, that sounded like trying to reverse the flow of toothpaste (v.4).

Certain things *are* like toothpaste. I'm thinking of the Advent calendar I made this past year. I applied glue on the wrong side of the black sixes, only to realize that the glue that I used was white and unresponsive to acetone. There would be no flipping the felt over and saving face.

When people say that there is no undoing their experience of divorce or the damage done to a loved one's body by a traumatic injury, we are better for honoring these statements.

In the case of Nicodemus and Jesus, however, neither crafting goofs nor life-altering loss is in the air. Jesus is talking about what can and does need to happen a second time if we want to grow beyond where we are. Jesus is talking about birth.

At birth, our senses sprung into action. Rebirth therefore signifies the activation of another set of senses – what John Wesley called the spiritual senses.

In using birth imagery, Jesus steers the conversation to a place where Nicodemus must consider not simply *what* he knows but *how* he knows what he knows. It's not that the lesson is on spiritual rebirth. It's that spiritual rebirth is important if Nicodemus wants to receive what Jesus has to give: a quality of life.

Sometimes there is work to be done before the work we *want* to do. If our spiritual senses dull or disengage or never come alive in the first place, the metaphor of being born from above captures the necessarily first order of business.

How we know what we know matters. It matters enough for Jesus to use the precious time he had with Nicodemus to address this very thing. Growing beyond where we are might begin somewhere other than where we place the starting line.

John 3:1-9 {The Voice}

Nicodemus was one of the Pharisees, a man with some clout among his people. ²He came to Jesus under the cloak of darkness to question Him.

Nicodemus: Teacher, some of us have been talking. You are obviously a teacher who has come from God. The signs You are doing are proof that God is with You.

Jesus: ³I tell you the truth: only someone who experiences birth for a second time can *hope* to see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus: ⁴*I am a grown man.* How can someone be born again when he is old *like me*? Am I to crawl back into my mother's womb for a second birth? *That's impossible!*

Jesus: ⁵I tell you the truth, if someone does not experience water and Spirit birth, there's no chance he will make it into God's kingdom. ⁶*Like from like.* Whatever is born from flesh is flesh; whatever is born from Spirit is spirit. ⁷Don't be shocked by My words, *but I tell you the truth.* Even you, *an educated and respected man among your people,* must be reborn *by the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God.* ⁸The wind blows all around us as if it has a will of its own; we *feel and hear* it, but we do not understand where it has come from or where it will end up. Life in the Spirit is as if it were the wind of God.

Nicodemus: ⁹I still do not understand how this can be.

NURTURE

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

{Inward}

WE ARE PRAYING for Lillian Faith Ruark, Glen Andrews, Mary Marshall, 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.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH with Ms. LaRonda is a mighty good thing! After the 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.



MAUNDY THURSDAY looks like a meal woven into a worship service. You do not have to bring food to participate in the service scheduled for **Thursday, March 29 at 6:30 pm.**

However, these are foods that help us bring that night to life:

- Olives
- Fig spread or fig cookies
- Mediterranean crackers
- Dried fruits & nuts
- Prepared lentils or chickpeas
- Matzo ball soup
- Quinoa or couscous salad
- Potatoes
- Arugula
- Feta, Manchego, or Pecorino cheese

If you can you bring one or some combination of these foods (that are reminiscent of what Jesus would have eaten with his friends), tell Rachel. Otherwise come empty-handed to receive what God has to offer the Church and what we have to offer one another during Holy Week.