

Boulevard United Methodist Church



The entire book of Numbers is set in a journey through the wilderness ('In the wilderness' is the Hebrew title for Numbers).

This wilderness setting presents problems and possibilities for shaping a community identity for the people of God. The period of wandering is a necessary buffer between liberation and landedness for the sake of forming this identity. Such a process does not unfold easily for Israel or for God.

- Terence Fretheim

September 30, 2018

On the Cover: Portrait of a Tent, Naiza Khan.

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

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19th Sunday after Pentecost
4:00 pm at Fox Elementary

Greeting Rev. Drew Willson

Opening Words

If it had not been the Lord who was on our side—let Israel now say—

if it had not been the Lord who was on our side,

then the flood would have swept us away;

then over us would have gone the raging waters.

Blessed be the Lord.

We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowlers;

the snare is broken, and we have escaped.

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

Hymn

Time with Children

Prayer

Music

Gospel Reading Mark 9:38-50

Sung Response

Scripture Lesson Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29

Sermon Rev. Rachel G. May

Song

Offering Tithes & Gifts

The Lord's Supper

Prayer

Hymn

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



Schoolhouse Inklings

with Rev. Rachel

THE BURDEN OF ALL THIS - Numbers 11:11

We know that the people are disenchanted. The Book of Numbers gives us a chance to be with Moses in *his* disenchantment. This man is struggling.

He can hear people crying and muttering something about meat. He has no secret stash of good vibes or beef jerky. *He* did not birth them (v.12). God dropped off the kids. God's kids, it turns out, were raised in a barn.

This story may ring a bell because the ingredients show up elsewhere in the first five books. We've heard these grumbles. We know something of this covenantal drama and of the lead actors: God, Israel, and Moses.

But have we ever gone with Moses into this Numbers 11 dimension of his experience? To the place where he says to God, "If this is the way you are going to treat me, put me to death at once (vv.14-15)."

This here is the give me relief or give me death stance.

Moses does not stay there. Something (besides the floodgates of other people's feelings) gives. By verse 24, he is unstuck. By verse 29, he's asking Joshua not to stand in the way of new way forward.

However, if we jump to this turn of events, we risk underappreciating wilderness. We risk, I think, a kind of blindness to the terrain of wilderness leadership.

Wilderness leaders are not confined to the payrolls of Outward Bound. They are superintendents and directors and bishops and officers. They are imperfect humans trying to move imperfect organizations forward, when nothing that used to work, will work.

Because these persons often have titles or appear celebrated, it's easy to overlook them when they are struggling – when *their* conversations with God sound like, "I am not able to carry all this people alone, for they are too heavy for me (v.14)."

Criticizing the figurehead is easy. Appropriately offering more than our two cents, well, that might take a little practice. I wonder if God (who has walked a mile in wilderness leader boots) is saying, *you can practice with me*.

Numbers 11

⁴ The rabble among them had a strong craving; and the Israelites also wept again, and said, 'If only we had meat to eat! ⁵We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; ⁶but now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.'

¹⁰ Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, all at the entrances of their tents. Then the Lord became very angry, and Moses was displeased. ¹¹So Moses said to the Lord, 'Why have you treated your servant so badly? Why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? ¹²Did I conceive all this people? Did I give birth to them, that you should say to me, "Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a sucking child", to the land that you promised on oath to their ancestors? ¹³Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they come weeping to me and say, "Give us meat to eat!" ¹⁴I am not able to carry all this people alone, for they are too heavy for me. ¹⁵If this is the way you are going to treat me, put me to death at once—if I have found favor in your sight—and do not let me see my misery.'

NURTURE

caring for one another and for our growth as disciples

{Inward}

Mark 9:38-41

³⁸John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.”³⁹But Jesus said, “Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. ⁴⁰Whoever is not against us is for us. ⁴¹For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.

WE ARE PRAYING for those grieving the loss of Dot Hechler. Wish to add or restore a name? Say so via the offering plate or the church’s e-mail address.

A BOOK STUDY in our new digs begins the last week in October.



Lauren Leggett will be leading this group. Mike Slaughter’s *Change the World: Recovering the Message and Mission of Jesus* will serve as the springboard for conversation.

Participants can expect four to six gatherings at 1837 W Broad as well as some optional mission-work/community engagement opportunities.

Questions? E-mail lauren.leggett@gmail.com. Look for further detail and registration instructions next week.

CHILDREN’S CHURCH for infants - 5 year olds begins after the children’s moment (approximately 4:15). Guardians are asked to walk children to Ms. LaRonda at the end of the hallway. They rejoin us for Communion.

YOUR FEEDBACK

Three-quarters of us have grown spiritually this past year. One person has not, and the remainder are not sure either way.

The two things that we have most appreciated from this Fox Elementary School era are: (1) new musical leadership (2) weekly Holy Communion.

25% of you participate in discipleship-related activity with/through other organizations.

With 4 to 5 “leftover” hours in the workweek, you would like your pastor to lead a process for discerning a mission focus. Secondly -- it’s a tie -- you would like your pastor to teach a bible study or equip a lay person to lead a book study.

75% of Boulevardians describe their approach to attending Sunday services as, “if I’m not out of town or sick, I’m there”.

Over half of us are “giving what we have to give” when it comes to current level of engagement. Roughly a third of participants are up for helping to meet an existing need. A couple of folks said that they have an idea or are experiencing God calling them to lead in a different way.

The sample size was sufficient. Two-thirds of our worshipping community responded. Thank-you!