

The Spire



January 2019

Loch Raven United Methodist Church



Operation Christmas Child Shoe Box Update

If you packed a shoe box or donated money to cover the mailing/handling of the boxes, a big THANK YOU to everyone who participated in this ministry of Samaritan's Purse. Our church members packed 76 boxes this year. This means, along with their box, an additional 76 children will be introduced to the Good News of Jesus.

Thanks again for supporting this important and meaningful project.

Yvonne Horn
Missions Committee

The New Year Looks Good On You

A new suit or a new dress can change the way you look, the way people see you, and the way you see yourself. Even though a new outfit can be a minor change it can make a major difference. Like the way new clothes can change the way you are perceived by others and yourself, the Bible informs us that our relationship with Jesus Christ has a similar spiritual effect. Galatians 3:27 informs us "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." Ephesians 4:24 speaks in similar language when it says, "And to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." When you become a child of God, you become clothed with Christ and it changes you.

I am excited about this new year and the possibilities it holds for us individually and collectively. This month we celebrate Epiphany, which marks the observance of the arrival of the wise men to encounter the Christ child. However, Epiphany is more than a historical event. It reminds us of the newness that is available through Jesus Christ. The word *Epiphany* means "A moment of sudden and great revelation or realization." It is an awakening of possibilities caused by a new reality. When you are clothed in Christ, you act differently, see the world differently, and think differently. The birth of Christ speaks to this newness.

Christ was born in a manger, not in the lap of luxury but as a common person. The God of glory came not as a king or a powerful person, but as a babe from humble circumstances. Jesus did not come preaching business as usual but a new commandment. In John 13:34 Jesus tells his disciples, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another." So, the question is, how will you allow the message of Epiphany to resonate in your life? Will you open yourself up to the newness that Christ offers? Will you embrace the new or try to cling on to the old and worn out? You do not have to be captive to life as

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All signed articles, letters, announcements, and other information of interest are welcomed and considered for publication.

The deadline for the February issue is **Sunday, January 13, at 11:00 a.m.** *Electronic Submission:* You may send articles by e-mail to: **njk.williams@yahoo.com** or place articles in the Church Office's newsletter box.

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Visit us on FACEBOOK.

Upcoming and Ongoing Mission Opportunities

Marty Marvel Food Pantry

11:00 am to 1:00 pm
1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month.

Manna House Breakfast Club

Feb. 16, May 18, July 13 and Oct. 12. If you would like to volunteer to help prepare or serve breakfast, contact Linda Cole: 410-666-5222.

To help better serve food-starved individuals in our community, we will be collecting specific, non-perishable food items monthly for ACTC. Watch the Sunday Worship Bulletin for the most critical need.

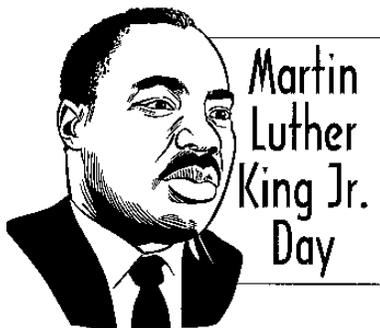
Collection of hotel-size toiletries for Essex UMC. There is a box for the items on the hospitality desk. This is an on-going collection.

Sandwich making for Essex UMC 3rd or 4th Tuesday of every month.

United Methodist Women—End of Year Giving 2018

Thanks to all who supported the United Methodist Women during 2018 with your pledges and support of our chocolate Easter eggs and gift cards fundraising projects. As a result, UMW was able to donate a total of \$3,800 to the following organizations:

Board of Child Care Auxiliary	\$400
Essex UMC— <i>Table of Grace</i>	\$400
Quality of Life Retreats	\$100
Manna House	\$400
Assistance Center of Towson Churches	\$400
Ellen Hoover—Advance Special #10337A	\$300
Red Bird Mission	\$300
The Wesley—Endowment Fund	\$100
Asbury Methodist Village Guild	\$200
N. M. Carroll Home Life Water Canada (Wells)	\$300
U.M.C.O.R.	\$500
LRUMC Food Pantry	\$300
TOTAL	\$3,800



January 21



The Laity: Our Precious Legacy

Before joining LRUMC, George Sinkler (d. 2012) was for many years a lay speaker at Govans-Boundary United Methodist Church. While his daughter was recently cleaning out his study, she found the following talk he had given one Sunday in the 1980's. Because LRUMC's bulletins include on their back cover the line "Ministers & Evangelists: The People of LRUMC," it seemed appropriate to share George's take on what that means.

Today is Laity Day, a time when we who sit in the pews are to remind ourselves and to be reminded that we are almost as important if not as important as the preachers, the bishops, the district superintendents, and the annual conferences.

Some of you may be unaccustomed to seeing so many of your fellow pew members up here and are probably asking yourselves, "What are they doing up there?" Well, according to what we have been trying to say so far in the service through words, songs and scripture, we (and you) belong up here not only this Sunday but any and every Sunday—not necessarily to preach, but to participate—because St. Paul said that we the people, we **are** the Church, we are the body of Christ and members in particular. He said that just as the various parts of the human body cannot afford to be at war with each other if the organism is to live, so the various parts of the body of Christ cannot afford to be at war with each other if the Church is to live. We should love and care for one another just as we care for all the members of our own bodies down to the last follicle of hair.

It's rather frightening, isn't it, to be told that we who sit in the pews every Sunday are the body of Christ; to be told that we are the Church and that Christ has no legs, no arms, no eyes, no feet, no heart but ours; to be told that in a very real sense our lives may be the only Bible some people may ever read. Oh how careful, then, ought we to live and with what religious fear, if we a strict account must give for our behavior here.

In our scripture lesson [1 Cor. 12] we find Paul talking to an obviously divided church (that is, a church obviously experiencing difficulties) about the equality of spiritual gifts, because he told them that God sent the Holy Spirit to **all**—not just to bishops and apostles and those with special spiritual talents. It appears that some members of the Church at Corinth were suffering from a sense of inferiority because their spiritual gifts were less spectacular than some other members of the congregation. Of course it may have been too that some members were puffed up with an air of superiority because of their special spiritual gifts. We gather from these letters of Paul that things haven't changed too much in our churches. Paul wrote this letter to Christians at Corinth, a thriving city in ancient Greece with a population that may have been as large as 600,000. This letter was written just 54 years after the death of Christ. Paul had spent 18 months with those people, but they still fell to squabbling after he left them.

It could be asked at this point, "Why, if we lay people are the body of Christ, and if we lay people are the Church—why do we only get one day a year?" This question brings us to the root of the matter: The early Church was entirely a lay church. In the beginning there was no sharp demarcation between clergy and laity, which later made it necessary for the laity to remind the clergy at least once a year that we are the Church, and made it necessary too, perhaps, for the annual conference to remind the lay members that they truly are the Church and should take more responsibility for its welfare.

It seems that sometime between the rise of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire and the end of the Middle Ages, there gradually developed a sharp distinction between clergy and laity in the Church Universal—or the Church Catholic, as the Christian Church from whence we all came was called at that time. (Please, do not misconstrue my sentiments at this point. I am not attacking the Roman Catholic Church by any means. I am simply getting at the root of the laity.)

(Continued on page 5)

UMC Lectionary Calendar, Year C – January 2019

January 1 New Year's Day, Last day of Kwanzaa

Church Color: White
 Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
 Psalm 8 (UMH 743)
 Revelations 21:1-6a
 Matthew 25:31-46

Call to Prayer & Self Denial any period during January – March

January 6 Epiphany Sunday

Church Color: White
 Isaiah 60:1-6
 Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14 (UMH 795)
 Ephesians 3:1-12
 Matthew 2:1-12

January 11: Human Trafficking Awareness Day

January 13 First Sunday after Epiphany, Human Relations Day

Church Color: Green
 Isaiah 43:1-7
 Psalm 29 (UMH 761)
 Acts 8:14-17
 Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 18-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Korean American Day

January 20 Second Sunday after Epiphany, Ecumenical Sunday

Church Color: Green
 Isaiah 62:1-5
 Psalm 36:5-10 (UMH 771)
 1 Corinthians 12:1-11
 John 2:1-11

January 21: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Observed

January 27 Third Sunday after the Epiphany, Ecumenical Sunday

Church Color: Green
 Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10
 Psalm 19 (UMH 750)
 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a
 Luke 4:14-21

United Methodist Women January Schedule

“Women in Christ” Circle

Monday, January 7
 7:30 p.m.—Room 202
 Study: *When Faith Is All You Have*
 Lesson 6: When Faith Trusts Enough To Forgive
 Study Leader: Judy
 Devotions: Judy
 Hostess: Amy

Phyllis Downes Circle

Tuesday, January 8
 10 am—Parlor

NO GENERAL MEETING

The New Year Looks Good On You

(Continued from page 1)

usual, but can experience newness in Christ. Individually and as a church family, we can embrace new opportunities and new ways to bless others. Epiphany is like a spiritual new suit. A new opportunity to see the world differently and for the world to see you differently. Through Jesus Christ, the new year looks good on you.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor George

Membership Updates

Births:

Olivia Michaela Eshleman
 December 5, 2018
 Proud parents:
 Scott and Megan Eshleman
 Proud sister:
 April Eshleman

Deaths:

Harriet Cole
 November 22, 2018
 Grace Boner
 December 10, 2018

Address Unknown:

(Please let the office know of any current addresses of which you are aware.)

Cathy Gansert
 Albertha Weah



The Laity: Our Precious Legacy

(Continued from page 3)

At any rate, by the end of the Middle Ages there was a great gulf between Church and laity, clergy and laity. The Church belonged to a hierarchy comprised of popes, bishops, archbishops, priests, nuns and monks. It was theirs to bestow upon the people or to withdraw from them by excommunication.

But then the Protestant Reformation of Martin Luther and others in 1517 gave the Church back to the people where it had been in the first place. Martin Luther told the popes, priests and monks that the Church consisted of the believers. We are all priests, he told them. He appealed to the German people more broadly to rise up and reclaim their Church and to help reform it. In a popular pamphlet published in Germany in 1523, a son is made to say the following to his father: "Haven't you heard that we are all priests? After all, God can just as easily spread his Gospel through a poor plow boy [or plow girl] as through monks and priests."

And, perhaps, it is more than mere coincidence that the scripture lesson for Laity Day comes from St. Paul and his first letter to the Corinthians. Martin Luther was heavily influenced by his reading of Paul's letters to the Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians and Galatians. This reading drove him to the momentous conclusion that the just shall live by faith, that all believers make up the body of Christ, and that although there must be a division of labor because of different spiritual gifts, all members are important—no one more or less than the other.

St. Paul and Martin Luther left the laity a splendid legacy, a great inheritance and also an awesome responsibility. What have we done with it? What will we do with it? Somewhere along the way since 1517 we, in the pews, seem to want to give our inheritance back to the preachers, bishops and the annual conference. It's up to us at this church to stay alive and live. Laity Day is as good a day as any to rededicate ourselves to the proposition that our church shall live—that our church as a Christian service station must stay open. We service on average 100 spiritual automobiles a week. They roll in every Sunday, and they say to God's attendants (the pastors), "Fill 'er up!" Some of us come in on empty, some half full, while others of us just want to top off our tanks to make certain we don't run out before the next Sunday. Some of us may need regular, while others of us may have to have premium.

If all this is true, then you can appreciate the big job preachers have in servicing our spiritual machines. But they do not have to do it alone since God is there to help both them and us. All of God's gas stations have full-service islands capable of providing for every need. There are even self-service islands which allow us to do our own singing, praying, worshiping, and even preaching if we want to. All we have to do is hook up to the heavenly gas pump which never runs out of gas.

Why don't you hook up right now? Just close your eyes and say this to yourself:

Come Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove, with all thy quickening powers;
Kindle a flame of sacred love in these cold hearts of ours.
Please help us to always remember to see ourselves as Christ's members,
And see beyond the preacher to the Church which is **all** believers.

In closing, and returning to the question "Why, if we lay people are the body of Christ and therefore are the Church—why do we only get one day a year, Laity Day?" The answer is clear: We only get one day a year if we don't take seriously our role as essential to the life of the Church. The number of laity days we get each year is up to us. So, let us love one another as Christ has loved us; let us care for one another as we care for every part of ourselves. Praise be to God!

Human Relations Day January 20, 2019

By: Merrill Harrison

*Together, we extend a helping hand to those in crisis
so they can overcome formidable obstacles.*

Your Human Relations Day offering supports neighborhood ministries through Community Developers, community advocacy in the United States and Puerto Rico through United Methodist Voluntary Services, and work with at-risk youth through the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Program.

Turn on the news or drive around the outskirts of your town and you will find what Jesus called “the least of these.” These are the people living in the margins— the homeless, the almost homeless, the incarcerated, the impoverished, the hungry. We are called to serve our brothers and sisters in this place.

We are called to embrace them; to love them. When we love and serve the disenfranchised and the marginalized, we are continuing the ministry of Jesus and we are helping our neighbors understand provision, grace and who God is.

Jesus served even the least of us so that we might all reach our potential.

Human Relations Day is about celebrating the local and national ministries that do this work everyday. It’s about giving generously to make sure they can continue to do so.

Over and over Jesus served people like this, embracing them. And that’s what we want to model as the people of The United Methodist Church. To continue the ministry of Jesus, Human Relations Day was established as a Special Sunday that calls all of our churches to participate in helping all God’s children to realize their potential.

For more information, see:

www.umcsgiving.org/ministry-articles/human-relations-day

Other Special Giving Sundays in 2019:

UMCOR / One Great Hour of Sharing Sunday—March 31

Native American Ministries Sunday—May 5

Peace with Justice Sunday—June 16

World Communion Sunday—October 6

United Methodist Student Day Sunday—November 24

IN TOUCH MINISTRY

Special Prayer Requests

Please refer to insert in Sunday bulletins for up-to-date information.

Stay in Touch with some of our members who are not able to regularly attend church. Contact the church office for up-to-date information.



January Birthdays

- 1 Laurie Collidge
- 2 Gregory Sinkler
- 7 Hannah Yeich
- 14 Scott Eshleman
- 16 Owen Williams
- 21 Hortense Fauntleroy
Stephen Ferguson
- 25 James Ferguson
- 26 Margaret Tracey
- 27 Nancy Gillotti
- 29 Evelyn Dorfler
Carolyn Lutz
Michael Koogler

Missions in Action: Thank You

By: Merrill Harrison

Your mission dollars support a number of worthwhile projects locally, nationally, and internationally, and they are very thankful for those funds. Here is a note we recently received from Linda S. Lotz, Executive Director of the **Assistance Center of Towson Churches (ACTC)**.

I cannot possibly thank you enough for all you did to come together for the best Thanksgiving Basket Project this year. We received and distributed nearly 2,400 bags of food received from all, and we received financial donations and actual turkeys to cover everyone's meal. We also had one donation of a ham, and guess what, only one person asked for one! Such attention to detail increases my faith!

I want to share that the project made the cover of the Towson Times, and a nice story inside. On the cover, was our wonderful chair, Pat Shaw in action. Lots of volunteers appeared in the pictures both in the article and on the series of pictures published in the Sun.

Cover Page

<http://enewspaper.towsontimes.com/html5/desktop/production/default.aspx?&edid=cc387d39-adda-4d8b-9f0c-2f029ee3d73b>

Story

<http://enewspaper.towsontimes.com/html5/desktop/production/default.aspx?&edid=cc387d39-adda-4d8b-9f0c-2f029ee3d73b>

Baltimore Sun Photo Gallery

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-county/towson/ph-tt-share-your-blessings-1121-20181116-pg-photogallery.html>

*Thanks to Joe Barr for hosting a beautiful and meaningful Ecumenical Prayer Service on November 14 at the start of the project, and for the participation of Rob Carter, Joel Strom, **George Winkfield**, Chad Morreau, Avery Penn, Janice Pope, and Sam Young.*

Everyday so many people are finding ways to help their neighbors in need struggling to make ends meet through ACTC. For every frustration I feel, there is an answer of love and provision that picks my heart up and helps me go on. I could not do all of this without the wonderful work of our volunteers, and the partnership of our member churches, and the support of our friends and organizations that stand with us. Together we do this work, and it is beautiful to see.

For November we collected a total of \$425 to purchase turkeys for the ACTC Thanksgiving baskets.

If you would like more information on ACTC or to volunteer, see Lynn Jean, our church representative.