

# The Spire



December 2016

Loch Raven United Methodist Church

## Advent Sermon Series

Our Advent sermon series is called *Time's Up!* Here are the titles and Scriptures if you would like to read ahead:

11/27—*Time's Up!*  
Isaiah 2:1-5 and Matthew 24:36-44

12/04—*God's Indescribable Gift*  
2 Corinthians 9:10-15

12/11—*Christmas Changes Everything*  
James 5:7-10 and Isaiah 35:3-10

12/18—Choral Cantata

12/24—*What's Christmas All About?*  
Isaiah 9:2-7 and Luke 2:1-20

12/25—*Joyous Celebration*  
Nehemiah 8:2-10 and Luke 2:10



**"...and a little child will lead them." --  
Isaiah 11:6**

It's happening again. The build-up to Christmas is on its way. The pace of life gets faster. The money gets spent a little more liberally. The visiting of relatives and friends starts.

It is happening and hits us without our ever realizing it. Christmas is coming. What I can never figure out is when does the Christmas rush actually begin. Does Thanksgiving kick it off? Judging by the decorations in stores I'd have to say it begins at Halloween.

We shop. We visit. We decorate. We shop and visit some more. Instead of all of the busyness helping us to focus on what Christmas is about, it often drives us the other way.

I recently read a funny article about holiday stress relief. Here are some of the suggestions:

Pretend you are still in control.

Go to a coin laundry and throw in the towel.

For a quiet evening, play a blank CD at full volume.

Replace your inbox with a garbage can.

Answer a highly technical question in your best Donald Duck voice.

All of us could use a little more fun and lightheartedness in our lives. I think about that Isaiah 11:6 Scripture, "...and a little child will lead them." Do you think a little child would be doing some of the things we do to get ready for Christmas? I think a little child would be having much more fun with life than we do. After all, what is it that we wish each other this time of year?

Merry Christmas!

From your Pastor,

*Cliff*

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*The Spire* is published monthly (except July and August) by Loch Raven United Methodist Church, 6622 Loch Raven Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21239.

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

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

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## Music Ministry's Spotlight

By: Sam Chin, Music Director

This month's spotlight member is Myra Wagner. Myra has been an integral member of the bell choir way before I arrived at LRUMC. Perhaps because she had been a sign language teacher, I've always been inspired to watch her perform her bells so passionately and expressively. In fact, she has been featured a number of times using sign language to enhance our worship experience at church.

Myra has been our church secretary for several years and is currently on a leave of absence from that position. Her dedication and love for this church, along with her abilities to get everything in order (not to mention all the times she has helped me out), will be greatly missed during her leave of absence. We hope to see her continue to make our worship services beautiful as she rings her heart out!

*When did you start attending Loch Raven UMC and when did you get involved with the Music Ministry?*

I started attending LRUMC when my family moved to Baltimore in 1972. At the time I was in 10<sup>th</sup> grade and jumped right into UMYF and the youth choir. Later, I tried out the chancel choir for a little while in 12<sup>th</sup> grade. After returning home from college, I told the music director, Dan Moore, that I was ready to truly join the chancel choir. When I told him I sang alto, he said he had too many altos and could really use me in the bell choir. So I joined the bell choir and never looked back! (By the way, the bells sat in my parents' living room for a few days during my senior year of high school. My dad was the manager of Cokesbury at the time, and Dan had asked him to bring a set to church for him to try out.)

*What is your most memorable experience in LRUMC's Music Ministry?*

I have several memorable moments:

When the youth and chancel choir made a record while I was in high school. (I still have the record!) I remember a siren went off as a fire engine left the station up the street. We kept singing and the siren cannot be heard on the record.

Singing the *Messiah* every Christmas season during the '70's.

The bell choir playing at our wedding, and subsequently at others' weddings – most recently Rob and Jen Weaver's.

*What are your favorite hymns?*

*To God Be the Glory* (for the lines "his Son . . . opened the lifegate that all may go in" and "but purer, and higher, and greater will be our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see").

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Advent 2016

By: Merrill Harrison

Advent and Christmas are two distinct seasons in the Christian Year, each with its own purpose. By observing Advent, we begin the Christian Year by focusing on the promise of Christ's second coming as a means to prepare ourselves for the celebration of his first coming. We join the shepherds in their adoration of the newborn Messiah and Mary and the magi in their contemplation of God becoming flesh and dwelling among us.

Each Sunday in the Advent/Christmas season series highlights a key theme identified in the gospel reading for each week. (See *UMC Lectionary Calendar – December, 2016* for Scripture readings.)

### **Advent 1: Watch—**

November 27

Advent begins with the call of Jesus to his disciples to stay on watch for the fulfillment of all things.

### **Advent 2: Turn—**

December 4  
Becoming aware of the end of the universe as we know it that Christ will bring about, we are invited to repent, to turn from our attachments to the powers of death and destruction in this age, and live out of the Spirit-led mission of the coming reign of God.

### **Advent 3: See—**

December 11  
Once we have turned toward the fulfillment God intends, we begin to be able to see the world and treat others in it in a new way.

### **Advent 4: Dream—**

December 18

Even as we begin to see God's way of compassion and mercy, we also—like Joseph—come to acknowledge our reliance on God communicating with us and transforming us, not just in our waking, conscious lives, but in our sleeping, unconscious lives as well.

### **Christmas Eve: Peace—**

December 24

Whether in dreams or visions of angels, we see and hear and join the chorus of the heavenly host announcing the birth of Jesus as a sign of peace to all people of good will.

### **Christmas Day: Word—**

December 25

In a Service of the Word today, we contemplate the mystery of the Word made flesh and dwelling among us.

### **Epiphany Sunday—**

January 1

The constellations reveal the birth of the Messiah, and the powers of this world are revealed for their self-preservation and violent resistance to the saving work of God.

The promise is Jesus Christ—the culmination of all things we celebrate, contemplate, and join the heavens themselves in declaring **Jesus Christ as the hope of the world.**

## UMC Lectionary Calendar December, 2016

**December 4** – Second Sunday of Advent, Year A  
Church Color: Purple  
Isaiah 11:1-10  
Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19 (UMH 795)  
Romans 15:4-13  
Matthew 3:1-12

**December 11** – Third Sunday of Advent, Year A  
Church Color: Purple or Pink  
Isaiah 35:1-10  
Luke 1:47-55 (UMH 199)  
James 5:7-10  
Matthew 11:2-11

**December 18** – Fourth Sunday of Advent, Year A  
Church Color: Purple  
Isaiah 7:10-16  
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 (UMH 801)  
Romans 1:1-7  
Matthew 1:18-25

**December 24** – Christmas Eve, Year A  
Church Color: White  
Isaiah 9:2-7  
Psalm 96 (UMH 815)  
Titus 2:11-14  
Luke 2:1-20

**December 25** – Christmas Day, Year A  
Church Color: White  
Isaiah 52:7-10  
Psalm 98 (UMH 818)  
Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12)  
John 1:1-14

**December 31** – New Year's Eve/Watch Night, Year A  
Church Color: White  
Ecclesiastes 3:1-13  
Psalm 8 (UMH 743)  
Revelation 21:1-6a  
Matthew 25:31-46

## Missions *In Action*: Board of Child Care

### *Hope for the future, power in the present.*

By: Merrill Harrison

Your mission dollars support a number of worthwhile projects locally, nationally, and internationally. Our focus this month is on a local mission: The Board of Child Care and Auxiliary.

The Board of Child Care, an outreach ministry of the United Methodist Church, serves children and families who require physical, emotional, behavioral and social support. Since 1874 their mission has been **to provide children with the skills and support they need to lead healthy, productive lives.**

This is accomplished through residential and community-based services that provide safe, healthy and caring environments and sustain children and families by fostering self-esteem, respect for the community, and developing a sense of purpose and life skills needed to achieve their highest potential. Their vision is to become a community of hope—providing an opportunity to heal, and create a safe and caring environment for children, youth and families. They seek to make lasting change in the lives of those they serve by providing services that are durable, measurable and sustainable.

You also help the Board through your support of the workings of the Board of Child Care Auxiliary through your cookie donations, Thanksgiving Basket donations, and filling Christmas stockings with quarters and dollars.

The auxiliary is an organization of volunteers and supporters from across the Baltimore-Washington Conference who share the love of Christ with the children and families served by the Board of Child Care. Leslie Christopher serves as our Board of Child Care Auxiliary chairperson.

Other auxiliary projects include:

Easter baskets for the children

Graduation gifts (money and afghans) for high school graduates

Christmas Gift Shop for children to shop for their loved ones at bargain prices

Birthday cards and monetary gifts

District-sponsored field trips for the children to places such as a rodeo, museums, Hershey Park, Statue of Liberty, roller skating rinks, etc.

Participation in Box Tops for Education, Campbell's Labels for Education and other programs that provide cash for purchases.

Furnishings for chapels on campuses as well as other major purchases for the Board of Child Care over the years.

To learn more, see: [www.boardofchildcare.org/about-us/](http://www.boardofchildcare.org/about-us/)  
and [www.boardofchildcare.org/volunteer-auxiliary/](http://www.boardofchildcare.org/volunteer-auxiliary/)



## Board of Child Care News

I would like to thank the congregation for your contributions to the Thanksgiving Baskets for the Board of Child Care. We collected 126 cans of green beans, cranberry sauce and yams this year.

Also, during the 12-month period ending in September 911 soup labels and box tops were collected. Although Campbell Soup is phasing out their label program, the *Box Tops 4 Education* program is still active. A list of participating products is posted on a bulletin board in the Arcade. You may turn box tops in to me or put them in the container on the bulletin board.

In December, Christmas Stockings will be available for the Board of Child Care Christmas appeal. Sixteen quarters will fill a stocking and the donation will go directly to help the children at the Board of Child Care.

Thank you for your support.

*Leslie Christopher*  
Keyperson



### Birthdays

- 3 Matt Webner
- 4 Myra Wagner  
Amanda Brown
- 5 Charles Chilcoat
- 7 Nancy Williams
- 8 Judy Feustle  
Carole Webner
- 9 Christian Smith  
Jamie Lee Evans
- 12 Douglas McCrea  
Cliff Webner
- 14 Amy Burton
- 15 Albertha Weah
- 17 Taryn Mackey
- 18 Angela Chatman  
Laura Palazzi
- 20 James Manley
- 21 Grace Price
- 23 Eugene Amberman
- 24 Amy Price
- 25 Paul Njuguna
- 27 Pete McGinnes  
Bernadette Williamson-  
Taylor  
Alexandra Weaver
- 29 Amy Munden
- 30 Nancy Tarr Hart
- 31 Joseph Luke Barker

## 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.

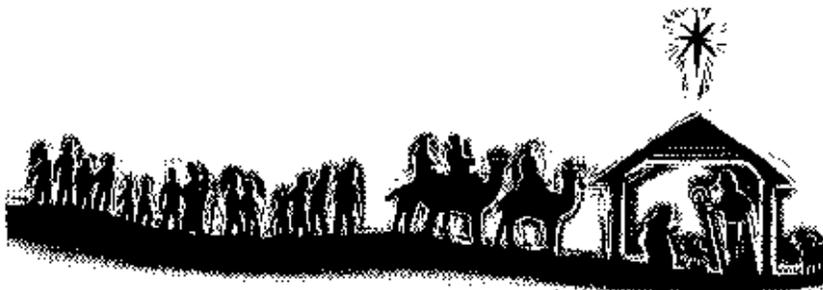
### Upcoming and Ongoing Mission Opportunities

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.

Manna House Breakfast Club – **Feb. 18, May 6, July 15 and Oct. 14** (If you would like to volunteer to help prepare or serve breakfast, contact Linda Cole: 410-666-5222.)

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 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month.



*Wise Men and Women Still Seek Him*

## Send a Christmas Blessing

What could be better? Send your church family a group Christmas card and donate the money you would have spent on more cards to Lifewater Canada. Last year the money raised helped provide clean drinking water in towns where people got sick and some died from water-related disease.

Just sign one card and post it on the big bulletin board in the Arcade. Make your donation by using the envelope marked *Christmas Cards* found in the church pews.



## United Methodist Women December Schedule

**“Women in Christ” Circle**  
Monday, December 5  
Holiday Dinner at Nancy Williams’ Home—6:30 p.m.

**Phyllis Downes Circle**  
Tuesday, December 6  
10 am—Brunch at Nancy Gillotti’s Home

**NO GENERAL MEETING**

**UMW Gift Card Sale**  
Gift Card orders will be taken in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, Nov. 27 and Sunday, Dec. 4.



### Opportunities available to help beautify the Sanctuary during the Advent/Christmas Season



- \_\_\_\_\_ 10 wreaths
- \_\_\_\_\_ Congregational Candles for Christmas Eve
- \_\_\_\_\_ Window Greens
- \_\_\_\_\_ Advent Wreath
- \_\_\_\_\_ Advent Wreath Candles
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4 Wreaths for front doors and side doors

Please call Audrey Moltz at 410-823-7837 about selection, availability and pricing information. Then send your check made payable to LRUMC along with the information below to the Church Office. All orders and payment must be received by **Sunday, December 11th.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

To the Glory: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your participation.  
*The Altar Guild*

# Music Ministry's Spotlight

(continued from page 2)

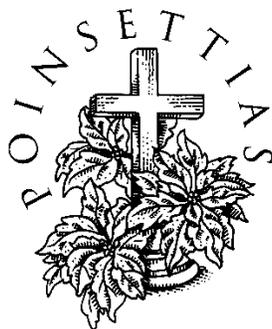
*Here I Am Lord* (this was the theme song for a mission trip I took to Costa Rica and the LRUMC congregation was just beginning to learn it at the same time). Also *Shine, Jesus, Shine, Victory in Jesus, Hymn of Promise, It Is Well with My Soul*

Three adjectives to describe LRUMC?

Caring, diverse, called to do God's work.

How do you envision the Music Ministry and LRUMC growing in the future?

Reaching out more to the nearby community, starting a praise service, continue the diversity of music (traditional and contemporary hymns, cultural hymns, etc.)



It's time to be thinking of beautifying our sanctuary for the joyous season of Christmas. If you would like to place a poinsettia in the church in honor or in memory of a loved one, please fill in the form below and return it to the Church Office by Sunday, December 11. **We cannot accept orders unless accompanied by full payment.**

**Plants may be picked up after morning worship on Sunday, December 25th.**

## POINSETTIA ORDER FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor Of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

To The Glory: \_\_\_\_\_

**# of Plants: \_\_\_\_\_ RED —\$10.50 each**  
**Plants are 6" pots—1 plant per pot—5-6 blooms per plant**

**# of Plants: \_\_\_\_\_ RED & WHITE MIX—\$20.00 each**  
**Plants are 6½" pots—2 plants per pot—10-12 blooms per pot**

**Please check one of the following:**

\_\_\_\_ I will donate the plant to the church for a "homebound member"

\_\_\_\_ I will pick up the plant after the service on Sunday, December 25