

The Spire



December 2017

Loch Raven United Methodist Church



Eternal Light

Christmas occurred when God invaded Earth in a strange and marvelous way. A special child was born to improbable parents in an unlikely place at an inconvenient time and in an unwelcoming world. Yet heaven's light pierced the darkness and shone through the life of that unique baby. That light was and is an eternal light. God's light in Christ is a saving light that can keep the world from total destruction, from the ultimate darkness. The message is always true: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (John 1:5, NRSV). And it never will.

—Charles Ferrell

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

In 1963 Andy Williams released the song *It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year* describing the joy of the Christmas season. The song speaks of the joys of Christmas caroling, eating roasted marshmallows, drinking Eggnog, the giving and receiving of gifts, and spending time with family and friends. I agree that all these things make the Christmas season special, but the reason that Advent is truly the most wonderful time of the year is because we celebrate the fact that Christ has come, and that Christ will come again. That God loves us so much that he gave his only son for us and everyone who believes will not perish but have everlasting life.

Advent means "coming" so we rejoice the coming of Christ, the God of glory, coming to earth in full vulnerability as an infant. The all-powerful, all-sovereign and eternal was born in a place where animals lived. Advent is the most wonderful time of the year because we celebrate that Christ will come again. He will come back for his people, setting things right and that "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, no sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away" (Rev. 21:4). Advent has been celebrated by Christians since the end of the 5th Century. Many scholars believe that Advent was instituted to help Christians who were starting to lose hope and who were beginning to forget. Advent is a reminder that Jesus has come and will come again.

Advent is also a time of repentance. In *Christmas from the Backside*, J. Ellsworth Kalas informs us, "In the liturgical churches, the color of Advent is purple, symbolic of repentance. It is in that mood of repentance that earnest Christians over scores of generations have prepared themselves for the celebration of our

(Continued on page 3)

Inside This Issue ...

Music Ministry Spotlight: LRUMC Handbell Choir	Page 2
Missions in Action: ACTC	Page 4
Poinsettia Order Form	Page 5
Membership Committee Winds Down 2017	Page 9

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 10, 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.

Music Ministry Spotlight: LRUMC Handbell Choir

By: Sam Chin, Music Director



The first time I saw or touched a handbell was right here at Loch Raven UMC when I first came on board. Despite having grown up in the church all my life this was the first time I've witnessed a Handbell Choir. It's been a joy to see this group so deeply embedded in the ministries of our church. If you look at me carefully when I ring you'll see a little smile on my face because I'm still a little fascinated every time I get to ring them.

Our Memorial Handbell Choir, under the direction of Cathy Miles, is one of the gems of our church. These dedicated ringers come together weekly and see dauntingly disjunct and difficult parts but within a course of time these individual lines combine to make the most heavenly harmonies that enrich our worship services. I especially highlight the dedication of our ringers because unlike a choir, where parts can be easily covered in cases of absences, the absence of a bell part can make the whole piece unrecognizable. Yet, for every performance here at LRUMC, these ringers always come through.

Recently our bells were professionally refurbished for the first time—the reason you haven't seen them these last few months. They are back now looking and sounding better than ever before. I look forward to seeing them back in action soon!

This month we spotlight two of these dedicated ringers, Jen and Rob Weaver:

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

Jen: We began attending LRUMC in 2003 when we were looking for a church to be married in. For Rob, having a handbell choir was a non-negotiable for a new church home. Luckily we found LRUMC and immediately felt welcomed. We were married in the church the next year.

Rob: From the time I was eleven, I had been playing in the handbell choir at my home church, Wesley United Methodist Church, in Dover, Delaware. Jen played the piano when she was younger, but had never even seen a handbell choir ring. Once we joined the church and I learned when practice was, she decided to come with me and try it out. We've been ringing together ever since!

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

Jen and Rob: We both agree that having the handbell choir play *Pachelbel's Cannon* at our wedding was the most memorable experience.

(Continued on page 3)



The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

(Continued from page 1)

Lord's coming by reminding themselves of our great need for a savior" (Kalas, 12). No matter how rich, privileged, or intelligent one is, we all need a savior. We all need God. So, as we get ready to embark on the Advent season, it is fine to enjoy the Eggnog, Christmas trees, and spending time with family and friends. However, the reason Advent is the most wonderful time of the year is that Christ has come, and Christ will come again. Let us celebrate and rejoice.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor George

Children's Sunday School

This year we are learning God's Word and serving one another in love along with the Deep Blue Kids: Asia, Kat, Edgar, and Caleb. We will hear exciting stories about the birth of Jesus, the beginning of His ministry, and some of His miracles. We will continue to learn how to live as disciples of Jesus through service—just like Jesus taught! We will "travel" the world to learn about God and what God is doing all over the world through new friends and adventure.

Our second travel stop is Kenya where we will meet Mercy, a graduate of ZOE—Zimbabwe Orphans Endeavor program, and she will tell us about her country and that God does indeed love all children. Our class will have an opportunity to help support the work of ZOE which operates in seven countries: Zimbabwe, Kenya, Rwanda, Malawi, Liberia, India, and Guatemala.

Through a comprehensive Bible study which incorporates pillar stories of the Old and New Testament we will discover what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ today.

Our winter lessons include:

A baby is coming	A voice in the wilderness
Mary and Joseph	Jesus and the children
A baby is born	A boy's lunch
The shepherd's visit	Jesus walks on water
Simeon and Anna	The four friends
The visitors from the east	Jesus calms the storm
	Jarius' daughter

Sunday school begins at 9:00 and concludes at 9:45—just in time for church! There are two children's classes:

ages 3 to 6, room 115, teacher—Caitlin Webster
grades 2 through 12, room 119, teacher—Merrill Harrison

Music Ministry Spotlight: LRUMC Handbell Choir

(Continued from page 2)

rience. Since we were essential participants in the ceremony (of course!), the choir was already short two ringers. And two other ringers weren't available. To have enough ringers, Rob reached out to his hometown handbell choir and his sister's handbell choir to fill the four open spots. This hodge-podge group practiced once together the day before the wedding and played so beautifully that you would never know they were strangers. They were a perfect addition to our special day.

What are your favorite hymns?

Jen: *On Eagle's Wings* and *Lord of the Dance*

Rob: *Horse and Rider* and *Lord of the Dance*

Three adjectives to describe LRUMC?

Jen & Rob: Welcoming, diverse, safe

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

Jen & Rob: We envision some of our younger church members becoming more involved. We hope that the congregation continues to attract younger families with children and that eventually there can be an active children's music program with many children learning to play handbells and sing in the choir. Hopefully our daughter, Ali, will one day be a ringer!

Missions In Action: ACTC

Reaching out to those in need with God's love and provision

Your mission dollars support a number of worthwhile projects locally, nationally, and internationally. Our focus this month is on a local agency: the Assistance Center of Towson Churches (ACTC).

Their goal is to provide emergency help for the needy in our communities. They operate with a director, an assistant and a team of 60 trained volunteers, including our very own Lynn Jean who has volunteered her time for over seven years.

Fourteen churches originally joined together in 1985 to provide emergency assistance, including food, eviction and utility cutoff prevention, payment for prescriptions and lunches for the homeless. Today, 50 congregations, along with many community organizations such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Elks and local businesses, participate in the outreach effort. A GBMC nurse practitioner helps with medical matters. The ACTC service area incorporates 21 zip codes in central Baltimore County extending up to the Pennsylvania line. The center is located at 120 W. Pennsylvania Avenue in Towson (between Baltimore and Washington avenues on the alley behind Calvary Baptist Church) and is open Monday through Friday from 10 AM to 2:45 PM. Wednesday hours have been extended until 5:45 PM. to accommodate clients with work schedules.

ACTC provides a number of services to our community, including:

- Bagged lunches
- Care Bags for the homeless
- Nonperishable food supplies for 3-5 days
- Help with fuel, utilities and prescriptions
- Fresh produce
- Free ID, birth certificate and license replacement
- Mail pickup for the homeless
- Showers and toiletries
- Clothing and shelter referrals
- Transportation to job interviews and medical appointments
- Services of a visiting nurse practitioner from GBMC (Greater Baltimore Medical Center)
- Online application for benefits by an onsite counselor from Catholic Charities

By the Numbers: *(based on the latest data available 2016)*

- 29,780 people assisted
- 312,686 pounds of food distributed
- \$564,646 value of food distributed
- 23,491 people assisted with food
- 528 individual homeless
- 7,759 total assistance for homeless
- 5,828 families helped financially
- 3,085 helped with bus tokens, passes and gasoline
- 1,475 sheltered bed nights
- 1,839 Thanksgiving Baskets for families
- 13,700 volunteer hours
- \$126,839 financial help given

If you would like more information on volunteering at ACTC, see Lynn; for more information on the center, see: www.actconline.info



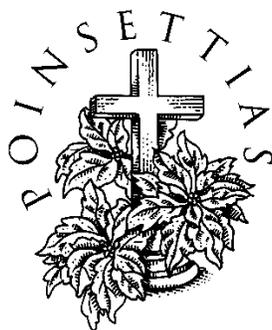
Among the veteran stories received for display on Veterans Day was one from Loch Raven member Olivia Steimel. As December marks the 76th anniversary of Pearl Harbor Day, we lift up the service of Fred A. Steimel who enlisted in the Army on December 4, 1930 and was in the service during this 1941 attack on Hawaii. During World War II he went to Africa, Italy, France, England and finally Germany. In September 1950 he was sent to Korea. After being injured in December 1950 he was in the hospital for 2-1/2 months. He spent the rest of his overseas time in Eta Jima, Japan before returning to the states. After serving 22 years, 6 months and 27 days, he retired as Master Sergeant on June 30, 1953 at Fort Knox, Kentucky.

Debi Wynn

Financial Commitment

If for any reason you need to change your financial commitment to the church, you may submit that change on cards which will be available in the church narthex and the church office.

Dave Jackson
Finance Committee



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 17. **We cannot accept orders unless accompanied by full payment.**

Plants may be picked up after morning worship on Sunday, December 24th.

POINSETTIA ORDER FORM

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

In Honor Of: _____

In Memory of: _____

To The Glory: _____

of Plants: _____ **RED —\$12.50 each**
Plants are 6" pots—1 plant per pot—5-6 blooms per plant

of Plants: _____ **RED & WHITE MIX—\$22.00 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 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.

December Birthdays

- 4 Myra Wagner
Amanda Brown
- 5 Charles Chilcoat
- 7 Nancy Williams
- 8 Judy Feustle
- 9 Christian Smith
Jamie Lee Evans
- 11 Wayne Harting
- 12 Douglas McCrea
- 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 Hoover
- 30 Nancy Tarr Hart

From the Mailbox

November 20, 2017

I am so grateful for your cards and telephone calls and also to Pastor George and Pastor Wayne for their visits. I had surgery to remove Stage 1 lung cancer without radiation and chemo. I'm now hoping to get my voice back with an outpatient procedure this week.

Thanks again for your prayers and support. You are a very special church family. Hope to see you soon.

Blessings and love to all,
Ruth Kriel

Membership Updates

Removed by Charge Conference:

Mary Ann Foster
Grace Hilton
Charles Per Dieu

Address Change:

Dolores Courtney
8800 Walther Boulevard
Apt. 3111
Parkville, MD 21234
Phone: 410-657-9604

United Methodist Women December Schedule

"Women in Christ" Circle
Monday, December 4
Holiday Dinner at Nancy
Williams' Home—6:30 p.m.

Phyllis Downes Circle
Tuesday, December 5
10 am—Brunch at
Nancy Gillotti's Home

GENERAL MEETING

Sunday, December 17
after church—all are invited
covered dish—bring what you
wish
Program: music and games



The Missions Committee would like to thank you for your special support of our recent projects:

Spirit Night at Chick-fil-A
\$86.28 was raised—100% of proceeds will be used for mission projects.

\$299.82 was donated to
Christian Blind Missions

Board of Child Care News

On January 2, 2018, the Campbell's Soup program *Labels for Education* is coming to a close. If you have Campbell Soup labels, please turn them in by December 10, 2017. You may give them to me, turn them in at the Church office or place them in the box marked for soup labels on the bulletin board in the Arcade.

The Box Tops For Education Program will continue. There is a list of participating products on the bulletin board in the Arcade or you can find the list online at: boxtops4education.com.

Thank you for your continued support of this program to benefit the children at the Board of Child Care.

Leslie Christopher



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 17th**.

Name: _____

Address: _____

In Honor of: _____

In Memory of: _____

To the Glory: _____

Thank you for your participation.
The Altar Guild

UMC Lectionary Calendar December, 2017

World AIDS Day, Dec. 1

December 3

First Sunday of Advent
Church Color: Purple or Blue
Isaiah 64:1-9
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
(UMH 801)
I Corinthians 1:3-9
Mark 13:24-37

December 10

2nd Sunday of Advent
Church Color: Purple or Blue
Isaiah 40:1-11
Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 (UMH 806)
2 Peter 3:8-15a
Mark 1:1-8

December 17

3rd Sunday of Advent
Church Color: Purple or Blue
Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
Psalm 126 (UMH 847)
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 24

4th Sunday of Advent/
Christmas Eve
Church Color: Purple or Blue
2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Luke 1:47-55 (UMH 199)
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38
Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96 (UMH 815)
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-20

December 25

Christmas Day
Church Color: White or Gold
Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98 (UMH 818)
Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12)
John 1:1-14

Kwanzaa Dec. 26-Jan. 1

December 31

1st Sunday after
Christmas Day
Church Color: White or Gold
Isaiah 61:10-62:3
Psalm 148 (UMH 861)
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:22-40
Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
Psalm 8 (UMH 743)
Revelation 21:1-6a
Matthew 25:31-46



Upcoming and On-going Mission Opportunities

Life Water Canada

Instead of sending individual Christmas cards to your church family, consider posting one card on our display and donate the money saved to Missions for Life Water Canada.

Ongoing Collections

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 ongoing collection.

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

Never The Same Again

After the birth of Jesus, the shepherds returned to the same old world from whence they came. Yet, there must have been a new excitement in that familiar world. Life must have taken on new meaning, for no one is ever the same again after being in the presence of the Lord.

Membership Committee Winds Down 2017

By: Debi Wynn

October was a busy month for the Membership Committee beginning with the Job Fair, and it was a good beginning. Many thanks to Merrill, Theresa, Adelaide, Rhoda, Ed, Pete, Bill, Pastor Wayne and Pastor George for their assistance with the Job Fair serving as greeters and to Helen for sharing her knowledge conducting a resume workshop. Everyone involved greeted visitors with good Loch Raven hospitality and served as a wonderful example of Christian witness with all who came in the door. To draw folks to the event, Theresa and Pastor George headed out to the community's shopping centers with flyers telling folks about this opportunity for job seekers, and we did have people come after talking with Theresa and Pastor George. Although none of the employers were hiring on the spot, each job seeker left with a positive feeling, which was a good thing to see. And it was good for the employers to see what Loch Raven offers in the way of community service.

"If you ever see the look on somebody's face the day they finally get a job, they look like they can fly...you don't really know how much you can do until you stand up and try." These are lines from *Dave*, one of my favorite movies, lines that provided an energy for putting into motion the pieces of Loch Raven's job fair. This event has such potential to bring a much needed positive impact, an uplifting change in the life of a job applicant and their family. As this first year for Loch Raven's job fair was a positive one, a 2nd annual LRUMC job event has been scheduled for Saturday, October 13, 2018 from 10am to 1pm. We are looking to make this event full of support resource experiences, adding more workshops, more employers and adding a health fair. Some proposed ideas are providing an interview outfit, a bag of groceries or lunch. So there is much to do to bring this valuable event together. A planning meeting will be held in January and if you would like to help with this second year for the job fair please let me know.

If you missed Loch Raven's Trunk or Treat, you missed a fun night of community outreach! Over 100 children, decked out in costumes, and their parents visited the two rows of cars that were decorated in a variety of themes from Alice in Wonderland, complete with a rabbit hole and live costumed characters, a car celebrating the 500th Reformation, a clown car, and lots of fun trunks in between. Many thanks to Loch Raven trunkers who participated! Mark your calendars to join in the fun for next year's Trunk or Treat on Saturday, October 27.

On Veterans Day Sunday, Loch Raven's Veterans were honored and thanked for their service. A display honoring the church's veterans was set up in the Narthex and remained there throughout November. If you are a veteran and were not included in this display, please send information on your service such as when served, which branch, rank, where served and any other info you would like to share plus a photo taken during your service and it will be archived and included in next year's display.

The Membership Committee wishes our Loch Raven Church family a wonderful Christmas season filled with joy, love and peace. Merry Christmas!

