

# The Spire



February, 2009

Loch Raven United Methodist Church

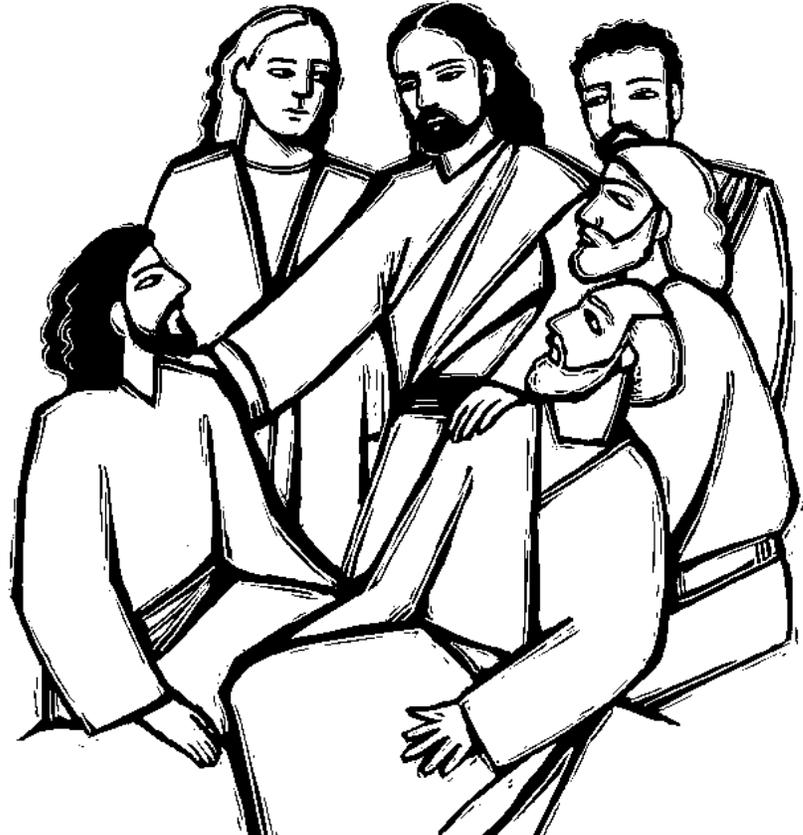
## February Mission Collections

Our February mission collection will aid the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Baltimore, Inc. Ronald McDonald House serves as a home away from home for thousands of families every year as a family member undergoes medical treatment. The workers and volunteers are constantly striving to meet the needs of those they serve and they have an extensive "wish list". Please place your item or items in Fellowship Hall. Thanks for your support.

**Collection Sundays:  
February 1, 8, 15 & 22**

Items Needed:

Laundry Detergent  
Trash Bags (13 gallon &  
55 gallon)  
Coffee/Sugar/Powdered  
Creamer  
NEW Children's books and  
DVD's



**"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me."**

John 14:1 NRSV



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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 March issue is **Sunday, February 8, 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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**Change of Name/Address** - Call, mail or e-mail church office.



## Have A Heart

Valentines of every size and description adorn store windows and other places of business this time of year. The holiday has become a time for love to be enthroned as a virtue, with the heart symbolizing the romance of our lives.

But the heart symbolizes not only love, but life itself! Without a heart, our bodies cannot survive.

Consider God's words to Samuel: "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7, NRSV).

The heart—that inner countenance—shows what we really are. Samuel was to seek one of the sons of Jesse to be the new king. David, even though he was the weakest physical specimen, was the one selected. His heart was great.

Love looks deeper than outward appearances, and we can thank God for that. Don't be swayed by mere valentines—have a heart!

## Youth Group Happenings

The Youth Group kicked off 2009 by going ice skating at Mt. Pleasant Ice Arena on January 4th. Everyone did a great job, but no one could keep up with Matt Price. The youth noticeably improved from last year: No one even fell!

The youth completely sold out their supply of 2009 God's Creation Calendars. Thanks to everyone who supported the youth and helped make this fundraiser so successful. We hope that you will enjoy your calendars all year long.

Seven youth will be attending the ROCK weekend retreat. Please keep these youth in your prayers as they travel to Ocean City this month. The youth will be accompanied by Pastor Gayle, Dick, Karen Jones, and Kris Seets. (They'll definitely need your prayers). The ROCK retreat is an annual event open to all of the youth in the Baltimore Washington Conference of United Methodist Churches. Loch Raven has been fortunate to be able to send a group of our youth almost every year. The ROCK retreat is January 30th - February 1st in Ocean City, MD.

The Youth Group is currently planning activities for the spring. Please contact Kris Seets if you have any fun ideas.



February 25



Dear Friends,  
The first night of our study of *Three Simple Rules: A*

*Wesleyan Way of Living*, we were talking about how we interact with other people of faith, other people on a spiritual journey. One of the members of the class asked this question: "If our paths are different, does someone else have to be wrong in order for me to be right?"

It was a great question which highlights the way it is all too often in the faith community. At a theological conference I attended in early January, one of the speakers was lamenting the tendency of Christians to spend a lot of time saying who or what they are not, rather than claiming who they are or are trying, by the grace of God, to be.

What if we replaced the "not" statements such as: "I'm not a fundamentalist, liberal, evangelical, Bible thumper, relativist", or whatever other label you choose, statements whose goal is to separate, with statements of who we are? How about statements like these: "I'm a forgiven child of God on a spiritual journey"; "I'm blessed and believe myself called to be a blessing to others"; "I've been transformed by the grace of God and want to know more about following Jesus"?

Another person in our class that night spoke about how our culture tends to encourage confrontation and combativeness, which could lead us to speaking of ourselves in a way that defines others out, like the "not" statements. How much more helpful might we be to each other as companions in the faith if we used the second kind of statements, the ones that speak of who we are, and concentrate on our points of commonality of faith and desire?

We are blessed here at LRUMC with a diverse and interesting congregation. Our places of birth, family traditions and cultural expectations are not all the same, but yet we share a common faith in Christ and desire to live a redeemed Christian life. Our community of faith and our individual journeys of faith are all enriched when we do the hard, but rewarding work of finding our points of connection, learning from each other, and moving forward together as we follow Jesus.

It is a blessing to be in a congregation where this is a way of life, where who we are and who we are becoming, by the grace of God, is more important than who we're not. I give thanks to God for each of you.

*Pastor Gayle*

## United Methodist Women February Schedule

*Prepared by Betty Shock*

### "Women in Christ" Circle

Monday, February 2  
7:30 p.m.—Room 202  
Study: *Proverbs—Learning to Live Wisely*  
Lesson 8

### Phyllis Downes Circle

Tuesday, February 3  
10 a.m.—Room 202

### Ellen Hoover Circle

Wednesday, February 11  
9:30 a.m.—Room 202  
Study: *Women of the Old Testament*  
Hostess: Betty Shock

### NO GENERAL MEETING



## From the Mailbox

November 30, 2008

Happy Holidays LRUMC!

Just wanted to send some love to the whole LRUMC community from Vanuatu. . . that includes everyone—youth, elders, groups, choir, administration, etc.

Thank you to the Missions group and anyone/everyone who contributed to the costs of sending packages and/or the contents of them. They were warmly received I can assure you of that.

We're getting into the warmer months now and that means many things—rain, pineapples and mangos, mud, mosquitoes, cyclones, drinking water, more beach time, problems with transport and a whole bunch of other things that I will soon discover. The days are also getting longer, as if they weren't long enough sometimes! Christmas is just around the corner and as far as I can see the spirit of Christmas is and will be alive and well here on Tanna. Just because we're here in the tropics of the South Pacific doesn't mean that the essence of the holiday spirit is absent. On the contrary, I'm beginning to see a number of familiar customs and traditions with respect to the celebration of Christmas/New Year's. There is secret friend (like secret Santa), caroling, gift giving and some other minor similarities that I'm sure to discover over the course of the next month.

There is even a "Christmas tree," although the Christmas tree of Vanuatu is a huge endemic tree of Vanuatu. It flowers in December (thus the name) and it is quite a beautiful sight. What was once a canopy of thin green leaves becomes a towering blanket (15-20m) of warm red flowers—a Christmas tree that not only stands taller than any living room pine but also decorates itself through Mother Nature's power!

I will be spending my first Christmas away from home, in a whole different country for that matter! But I'm excited at the same time. I'm thankful to be spending this year's holidays with the good people of Tanna Island. The plan is to spend New Year's at the volcano, possibly on the volcano. You can't top that! That's just tentative as of now. But whatever I end up doing I want you all to know that you'll be in my thoughts and prayers. Stay healthy and happy everyone—drink some eggnog for me too!

Love and peace,

*Tim Shelton*



## Evangelism & Outreach

A Thought:

*A smile is the shortest distance between two people.*

### 5 Simple Prayer Strategies

1. **Take advantage of down time.** In line at the grocery store, waiting in the doctor's office, stopped in traffic—use that time to pray.
2. **As you walk, pray.** Tell God about something important to you, or just thank him for a nice day and ask his blessing.
3. **Use drive-by prayers.** While in the car, keep a mental list of people you want to pray about and use your driving time to discuss something important with God.
4. **Pray yourself to sleep.** As you're trying to doze off and your mind wanders, reel it in and turn those thoughts to prayer. Remember each family member and pray about their needs.
5. **Keep it fresh.** For example, break up your prayer life on the days of the week. On Mondays, pray about things that begin with M—money, missionaries, ministry. Come up with your own system; be creative and shift things around.

*Today's Christian (M/J 08)*

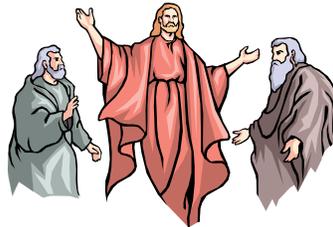
Blessings,  
*Katherine McKinney*

## Bible Quiz

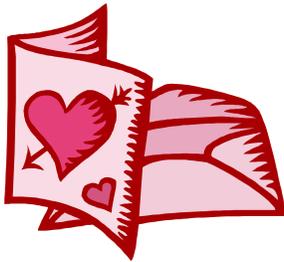
In Mark 9 Jesus took three disciples to a high mountain. While there, the men witnessed amazing things. Jesus' clothes became dazzling white, and then Elijah and Moses appeared to them. The disciples then heard a voice from a cloud that said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" (Mark 9:7, NRSV). Suddenly, Elijah and Moses vanished and the disciples were alone with Jesus.

Who were the three disciples who witnessed the Transfiguration?

- A. Peter, Andrew and John
- B. Peter, James and John
- C. Peter, James and Andrew
- D. James, Matthew and John



Answer: B



## Heroic St. Valentine

We probably think of romance when Valentine's Day comes. That's fine, but there's more to the story than that.

St. Valentine was a Christian priest and martyr who lived about A.D. 270. The

Roman emperor at the time was Claudius II. Claudius had been a successful general. He would not allow his soldiers to marry, because he wanted to make sure they could go to battle quickly. He thought family ties would make the men reluctant to leave home. Because St. Valentine promoted marriage and family life, he was jailed and later convicted of going against the orders of the emperor. He was martyred on February 14, the day we remember him and our loved ones.

While he was in jail, the jailer's daughter befriended him. He wrote her a letter of appreciation and signed it "Your Valentine." The tradition of exchanging valentines grew out of that heartfelt gesture.

## Membership Updates

### Address Changes:

Jill Eckenrode  
Justin Schelhouse  
Cassie Cheezum  
1690 Yakona Road  
Towson, MD 21204

LaVerne Nimmo  
8820 Walther Blvd.  
Apt. 3220  
Baltimore, MD 21234  
410-665-2171

Nancy Scheeler  
800 Southerly Road  
Unit #623  
Towson, MD 21286  
410-616-8725

Robert & Marian Steele  
Springwell  
2211 West Rogers Ave  
Rooms 313 & 316  
Baltimore, MD 21209  
410-664-3779

### Deceased - Member:

Isabel Bisser  
December 16, 2008

Henry Roehl  
January 1, 2009

### Address Unknown:

If you know the current address for the following members, please call the Church Office:

Pauline Ahalt  
Jermaine Carter  
Amanda Diaz  
Mark Formwalt  
Mary Foster  
Nancy Hart  
Charles Per Dieu  
Marion Redd-Roberts  
Beatrice Welsh