

The Spire



February, 2011

Loch Raven United Methodist Church

Haiti Mission Team

As many of you know, the Baltimore Regional mission trip to Haiti, scheduled for December 9-17, 2010, was cancelled the day before the team left because of cancelled flights due to the unrest after election results, believed by many to be fraudulent, were released there. The team has been rescheduled and is due to leave for Les Cayes, Haiti on March 12, 2011. The team is led by Pastor Gayle and Dick Annis-Forder is the treasurer for the team. Please pray for this mission team, and for Tom Vencuss and Beth Guy who coordinate the UMCOR volunteers in Haiti. Thank you again for your generous support for this mission endeavor.



Loch Raven Light Reflectors

On January 9, 2011, the congregation of LRUMC was invited to consider the Light Reflector's Covenant, approved by the Charge Conference in October of 2010. This covenant spells out areas of Christian discipleship referenced in our baptismal covenant promises to support the church and follow Jesus by our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness. The covenant asks those who take it up to commit to doing these things: pray daily, attend worship unless sick or away, take part in a group study to grow in faith and knowledge, give in proportion to income, serve within the church and in the community, and be prepared to witness to faith when the opportunity is presented.

When the covenant was approved, we said that we hoped that at least 12 people would step up to be the "pilot" group, to live this Christian discipline within our life together as a church. Jesus

started with 12, so it seemed a good number. Thirty-five people presented their covenants and intentions, responding to the call of baptism on our lives. Please pray for all who have made this commitment, watch for announcements of enrichment opportunities to support this commitment, and see Rhoda Wilson, Church Council Chair, Pastor Gayle, or Pastor Bob if you would like to be a part of the covenant.



You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:14-16, NRSV

Inside This Issue ...

Sour Beef Dinner	Page 2
Pastor's Message	Page 3
Missions 2011—Drilling a Well in Haiti	Page 4
News from Missionary Sue Porter in Ganta, Liberia	Page 6

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 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.

Editor - Nancy Williams

Children's Page and Address Page Editor - Peggy Kelly

Pastor - Gayle E. Annis-Forder

Pastor of Congregational Care - Robert J. Fringo

Church Office Hours: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.
Phone: 410-825-0900. *Fax:* 410-825-2600. *E-mail:* Info@LRUMC.org

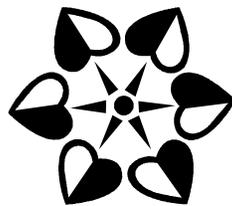
Change of Name/Address - Call, mail or e-mail church office.

Web Site: www.LRUMC.org

New Boiler Reduces Heating Costs

The installation of the two new boilers in 2008 has been quite a blessing to the church. Aside from the more efficient heat throughout the building, our heating cost has been drastically reduced. In 2009 we spent \$26,202.67 and in 2010 we spent \$17,868.17, a savings of \$8,334.50. We thank the congregation for your sacrifice and contributions and look forward to your continued donations toward the boiler fund.

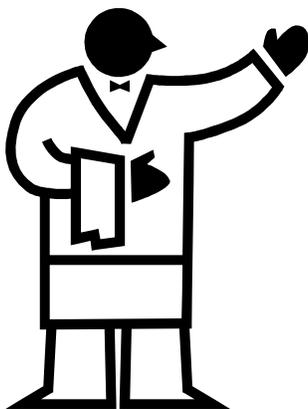
The Trustees



When Christians Get It Wrong

A sermon and study series on this topic began in mid-January and continues through most of February. We are exploring the growing negative perception held of Christians by many of those outside the church, particularly younger adults, as well as looking at Jesus' teachings about how we relate to those outside our faith community, those we might identify as "sinners", and those of other faiths. We are also looking at how Jesus led by example.

LRUMC younger adults were invited to comment on this subject, with a particular request to provide the flip-side to all the negative things that have been reported by those who do research on such topics. We thank them for their sharing. Their comments are being shared in the Monday evening and Wednesday morning classes, as well as on Sunday mornings in worship. These young adults are bucking a trend by finding value in Christian community, the wisdom of persons of other generations, and the strength of an enduring faith. Let's all take this opportunity to learn from each other how we might better share the love of Jesus with a new generation, as it once was shared with us.



Sour Beef Dinner

**Saturday, March 5
2:30 P.M to 6 P.M.**

\$15.00 for adults
\$15.50 for carry-out
children 6-12 \$7.50
children 5 and under free.

Volunteers call Dave Jackson 410-560-6385
or Church office



Dear
Friends,

By the time
you read
this, I'm
sure that
other trage-

gies will have occurred, and there will be other topics on the evening news, but as I write, the shootings of January 8, 2011 in Tucson, Arizona at a constituent event held by Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords dominate the news. Even in a nation grown far too accustomed to violence, this horrific incident is big news.

All kinds of people are suggesting strategies for response in many areas; law enforcement, legislation, mental health care, etc. Theologians have weighed in on this too, and I'd like to share some suggestions for a Christian response, adapted from an article by Timothy Merrill, pastor and editor of a publication for preachers.

First, take action. Advocate for change where needed in issues of public safety, care for the mentally ill, a return to more civil discourse and dialogue, and other measures that will improve life for all of us. "Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow." (Isaiah 1:17)

Second, take no action. That is, take no violent action yourself. Embrace peace as a life-style choice. Consider these words from faith sources. "If it is possible, so far as it de-

pends on you, live peaceably with all." (Paul's letter to the Romans 12:18) "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." (Proverbs 15:1) "Non-violence is a powerful and just weapon. It is a weapon unique in history, which cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it. It is a sword that heals." (Martin Luther King, Jr.)

Third, be of your own mind. Resist the temptation to mimic the masses, to go with the crowd. Think, read, and analyze for yourself, and pray for God's wisdom to guide you. Again from the Apostle Paul: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2)

Fourth, embrace agape love. The Bible clearly calls us to a life of love; love for ourselves, our neighbor, and even those we perceive as enemies. This is not an easy Biblical teaching, but it is God's call on our lives.

No one of us can eradicate violence from society, or even from our communities, but each of us can make a difference where we live, and that's all God asks of us.

Finally, never despair. Even as we grieve for 9-year-old Christina Taylor Green, Federal Judge John Roll, Phyliss Schneck, Gabe Zim-

merman, Dorothy Morris and Dorwan Stoddard, and as we pray for the recovery of Congresswoman Giffords and the 13 others injured that day, may we also remember to pray for the young man who perpetrated this great evil and his family.

In the face of tragedy, evil and sadness, Christians are sent by God as bearers of hope, and not despair. "So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up." (Galatians 6:9)

I thank God for each of you, and for the hope you live before me, your families and communities, and all of God's precious children.

Pastor Gayle



Shedding Tears Before God

When Philip Johnson, renowned architect and designer of the Crystal Cathedral in California, was just 13, his family took him to France. When they entered the cathedral at Chartres, Philip was so moved by the majesty and beauty of the building dedicated to God that he burst into tears.

I have also shed tears in a church. I wept when I felt the nudging presence of God pointing me toward the ministry. I wept when I was ordained. I wept when I retired after serving as a pastor for 38 years.

I have seen people weep at the altar rail. I have seen brides cry during the marriage ceremony. I have observed people weeping at funerals and sometimes at the baptism of child. I recall a man saying to me, "I cried during the sermon. Do you know that what you preach can sometimes make a person cry?"

To weep before God is to be in good company. Job said, "My eye pours out tears to God" (Job 16:20, NRSV). A psalmist prayed, "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry; do not hold your peace at my tears" (Psalm 39:12 NRSV). Read Jeremiah 9 and you will understand why he is called "the weeping prophet."

Jesus wept over the wretched status of Jerusalem where he was spurned (Luke 19:41). He also wept when his friend Lazarus died (John 11:35). St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "I wrote you out of much distress and anguish of

heart and with many tears" (2 Corinthians 2:4 NRSV),

The point is this: When you are moved to cry before God, cry. People with caring hearts do that.

—Charles Ferrell

Boiler Fund Update

Once again, we thank everyone for their generous support of this large effort. At this writing, we are closing in on \$42,000 toward the \$73,000 needed. After reviewing the utility bills for 2010, the first full year with the new boiler, the finance committee and trustees feel that they can confidently say that the new boiler, coupled with the new windows in the sanctuary and second floor of the rest of the building, saved us at least \$8000 in utility costs, perhaps a bit more. We hope, before long, to be able to afford to replace the windows on the first floor as well, to increase our energy efficiency even more.

Everyone's support makes this happen, and we give thanks to God for all of you. 2011's progress toward the goal of paying for the boiler in full began with a contribution from LRUMC founding pastor Carroll Doggett and his wife, Nan, now retired in the Frederick area. Carroll sent a note saying that his check was his first gift sent anywhere of his 2011 tithe, and the note said "We can do it!" Yes, indeed we can.

Missions 2011

One of our goals for 2011 is to sponsor drilling a well in Haiti through Lifewater Canada. The cost of drilling a new well is \$3,000. We plan on paying for the well with \$1500 from our 2011 Mission budget, \$300 donated by the United Methodist Women, \$635 from our yard sale and \$100 in private donations. That means that we need to raise less than \$500 to meet our goal. To understand what a life-changing difference this makes, read this excerpt from a letter sent to Lifewater by grateful citizens of Mont Vision Village in Haiti:

Before our new pump was planted, the children would walk 5km into the mountain area as early as 4 am for water, hoping to get there before the animals muddied it up. They'd often have to take a plate to scoop the shallow water into the bucket. Everyone suffered from fever and diarrhea, but there was no other source available. Now that the pump is nearer we're healthier, our children have more energy for school and it tastes better too! We'll take good care of this well. Thank you for helping.

If you would like to help with this lifesaving project, call Joann Munden at 410-665-6361.

From the Mailbox

Dear Church Family,

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your kind words, prayers, and cards during my eye problems in 2010. Especially touching is your rejoicing with me at the outcome and positive results.

It is so refreshing to see your faces again since I have memorized you by voice. It is great to see the hymnal, but when I couldn't, I was surprised and thankful to realize how many hymns I knew by heart. Praise God.

Truly the Lord has answered our prayers.

Love to all,
Jo Thomas

Thank you sincerely for sharing our sorrow. During a time like this we realize how much comfort friends can bring. Your kind expression of sympathy will always be remembered.

The Williamson-Taylor
Family

*The unselfish effort to
bring cheer to others will
be the beginning of a
happier life for ourselves.*

—Helen Keller

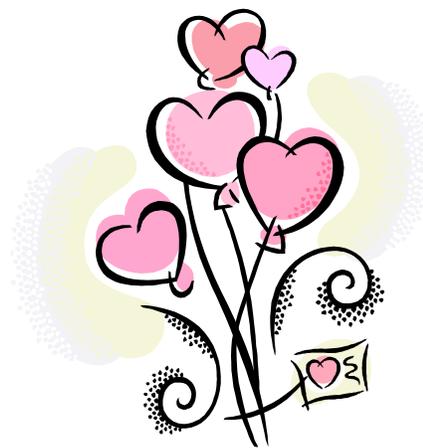
Dear Members of Loch
Raven UMC,

Once again I extend to you a very sincere thank you for your participation in the holiday party given this year on December 16 for the students at Lois T. Murray School. Your members are very generous to assist Mrs. Berl each year in providing such wonderful gifts to our students. The entire staff at our school sends their thanks to you for making this holiday party such a happy event.

Please extend our thanks and good wishes for a happy holiday season to all of your members from the staff and students at Lois T. Murray School.

Sincerely,

Roslyn Canosa, Ed.D.
Principal



Special Thanks to Young Adult Fellowship

On behalf of the members of the Board of Trustees of Loch Raven United Methodist Church, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation for the wonderful job you all did in cleaning the church playground and for completing the "Leaf raking Project" to raise funds for the boiler fund. Your selfless acts have not gone unnoticed and we pray that God will continue to strengthen all of you physically, mentally and spiritually as you continue to labor in His Vineyard. Keep up the good work and stay blessed.

David Brown, Chairman
Trustees

United Methodist Women January Schedule

Prepared by Betty Shock

Phyllis Downes Circle

Tuesday, February 1
10 am—Parlor
Study: 1st John 4:1-6

"Women in Christ" Circle

Monday, February 7
7:30 p.m.—at Yvonne's Home
Study: *Growing Through Life's
Challenges*
Lesson 10—Growing Through
Failure

NO GENERAL MEETING

News From Sue Porter, Missionary in Ganta, Liberia

December 6, 2010

Greetings from Ganta, Liberia! I hope you have a happy Advent Season, the season of the promise of the coming of Emmanuel, our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus! What a reason to rejoice and celebrate! And I hope you have a joyous Christmas celebration.

NEWS AROUND WINIFRED J. HARLEY COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES OF THE UNITED METHODIST UNIVERSITY

Midterms are over so students know what they will have to do for the rest of the semester. And from this we can determine the students who will be 'capped' December 21, 2010. This represents the passage of a beginning nursing student to one recognized as passing the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary to be on the hospital ward practicing on patients under supervision of either a ward nurse or a clinical instructor. One major obstacle is nursing math. The educational process from the beginning of their educational process has not provided the foundation in math, or reading for that matter, because of the 20 years of war. Now they come unprepared to solve simple calculations. We redesigned the course, however, so that what had been a full semester course, we taught in half a semester. This way, the students who fail, instead of failing the whole semester can take the course again over the second half of this semester and give them a chance to pass instead of

being held back from the second semester.

I'm seeing something very interesting and disturbing this semester. Many students have financial struggles. Many are self-supported, especially in the class that just started. I usually can tell by the end of the semester the students who are struggling to pay tuition and fees and to have money for food to eat. They slowly lose weight which is noticeable after a few months. However, this semester I'm already hearing stories of the students eating a meager diet. I'm told they will mix cream of wheat with oral rehydration powder [the solution that is given to a person with diarrhea to prevent dehydration]! It is inexpensive and they say it provides some electrolytes. The other thing is rice and papaya soup. Papaya adds in some flavor to the rice and vitamins but there isn't much protein. I may have to develop a feeding program to help the students. It's hard for them to think about studies and participate in clinical practice when their stomach is empty!

HOMEcoming: Winifred had its first Homecoming since 1999. The war and the school being displaced to Monrovia during those war years prevented it. But now with peace and stability in the school, it seemed it was time to resurrect the tradition. There is a strong affiliation with people who have graduated so the old alumni association was able to

get connected and organized. The earliest date for a graduation was 1979.

We planned the day for the end of midterm examination week so students could relax and enjoy themselves. It began with a parade through Ganta that ended at the Ganta United Methodist School's gymnasium for an indoor program. This included fundraising, speeches, and food. We then proceeded to a soccer field for games of kickball (the girls) and a soccer match between the male students and another local college. After this, there was rest time before a dance at a local club. It was a great time and nice to meet some of the alumni.

THE DENTAL NURSE PRACTITIONER PROGRAM:

The Dental Nurse Practitioner Program is underway as mentioned in the last newsletter. There are only three students after other applicants decided not to enroll at this time. However, since this is the first time the program is being offered, we wanted to start with a small number of students, so the small enrollment number is fine. The instructor, Dr. Ashwin Sakhararia, is from the Christian Dental College in Ludhiana, India. He is great not only for the teaching program but also for the patient care he is providing in the newly established clinic at the Ganta United Methodist Hospital. All the pieces of this project are finally coming together.

DORMITORY RENOVATION PROJECT: The biggest news is the start of the dormitory renovations! It has been a

(Continued on page 7)

News From Sue Porter, Missionary in Ganta, Liberia

(Continued from page 6)

long term goal of mine since arrival in January 2007 when I saw the living conditions of the students. After approval of the Advance Number through the General Board of Global Ministries, many congregations and individuals have generously contributed to the point where there were enough funds available to renovate one of the three dorms, Adams Hall. This is a girl's dorm and this past weekend the 24 occupants moved into temporary housing on the mission station. While this is a disruption during their school year, there is no time in the academic calendar when the dorm is not empty for the two months it will take to do the work. Besides, for the little inconvenience now, the girls know that when they return for second semester, they will have a new and improved living situation. We hope to be ready by February 6 when the Liberian Annual Conference will be held on the Mission Station.

Adams Hall is one of the oldest buildings remaining on the Mission Station, being about 60 years old. The contractor, Mr. Fred Gbatu of the African Construction and Enterprise Company, is from Ganta and knows the history and significance of the building and the nursing school. He will be able to keep the lovely brick exterior and most of the interior features to its original character and charm while improving the weak second floor, the electrical wiring, plumbing, and removing

the asbestos roof. It is a pleasure working with him.

After Adams Hall is finished, there are two dorms to go. The largest, called the 'Hostel', is where the boys live and where I moved to two months ago. It's a funny thing about this move. When I was still in my house, I would wake up at night during the rainy season and think about the students being there with the leaky roofs wondering how wet it was for them. Since I moved in, I sleep through the night rain or not. I guess this is where I'm supposed to be for now. Luckily, some temporary work has been done on the roof by the United Methodist University and the dry season is approaching. A well is being dug nearby so the boys don't have to go so far for water since there is no running water in the 'Hostel'. [I have a single room with a SMALL 'bathette' equipped with a commode and shower stall. I fill a barrel with water every few days.]

The cost for the renovation of the 'Hostel' is \$91,571.24. Already there is about \$13,000 towards this amount. Every donation helps towards the purchase of nails, paint, a door or window! The Advance Number for the Winifred J. Harley Dormitory Renovation is #3021119. You can give to the church, which will send your donation to the Baltimore-Washington Conference Center and on to the Advance or you

can go on-line to the United Methodist Church Advance site.

This is about all the news from Winifred for now. I hope you visit my blog to see pictures of the Homecoming parade, Mr. Gbatu and the construction crew at work, and other pictures from around the campus.

<http://suehereandthere.blogspot.com>

Best wishes for the New Year and I hope you have a Blessed and Merry Christmas! I'll be thinking of you all...it was just a year ago I was visiting many of you. Right now it seems so long ago!

In Service to our Living God,
Sue Porter, Missionary

“HOLY,
Holy
HOLY
is the
LORD
OF HOSTS;
the whole
EARTH
IS FULL OF HIS
GLORY”
ISAIAH 6:3, NRSV