

The Spire



February 2020

Loch Raven United Methodist Church



Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, comes on February 26. We Christians observe Lent for 40 days (excluding Sundays) to examine our spiritual condition and to strive to improve our relationship with God.

Lent is also a period of spiritual preparation for Easter Sunday, the greatest day on the Christian calendar.

During Lent most churches have additional services. Some offer special Bible study events or classes in strengthening the spiritual life. It is a good time to study the life of a great Christian from the past and the ways that person developed closeness to God.

It's important that each Christian practice spiritual disciplines to "show that you are a letter of Christ . . . written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts" (2 Corinthians 3:3, NRSV).

How We Live Together

The Romans Bible study at the church is in full swing as we study what many scholars believe is Paul's greatest letter. Major themes in Romans include the sovereignty of God, the love of Christ, and justification by grace through faith. The apostle Paul records in the first chapter of Romans that "For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, "The one who is righteous will live by faith." In addition, a vital topic Paul discusses in Romans that might not be discussed as much is how through the power of the Holy Spirit people with major differences can live together; how people from diverse backgrounds and opinions can go from being strangers to family under the unity of Jesus Christ.

The backdrop to the letter to the Romans is that scholars believe that around 49CE Emperor Claudius expelled Jews from Rome. Biblical Scholar Kenneth Berding writes, "The earliest house churches in Rome would have been primarily Jewish and would have culturally felt Jewish, but in A.D. 49 the Roman Emperor Claudius [expelled] the Jews from Rome. Jewish Christians, of course, would have been expelled along with the rest of the Jews. During the five years between Claudius's edict (A.D. 49) and his death (A.D. 54) when the edict lapsed and Jews started to return, the composition and self-understanding of the house churches in Rome would have shifted considerably. Paul's letter to the Romans would have arrived in Rome somewhere around A.D. 57, during the period when Jews were still trickling back into Rome...the expulsion of Jews from Rome had a tremendous impact on the churches in that city." As Jews returned home,

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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 9, 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.

Board of Child Care News

Announcing Changes to Collection of Soup Labels and Box Tops Programs

We have been collecting soup labels and box tops for the Board of Child Care for many years. Recently, there have been some changes to these programs.

The Campbell Soup Company has ended the Labels for Education Program. Soup can labels no longer include the logo for Labels for Education and the Campbell Soup Company is no longer redeeming old labels. Thank for your past support of this program.

The process for collecting General Mills Box Tops for Education is changing. Traditional Box Tops clips are being phased out and replaced with digital labels. Traditional clipped Box Tops will be accepted until the expiration dates printed on them. If you have some, please place them in the box on the bulletin board in the Arcade. There is additional information about the digital program posted on the bulletin board. You may also find information at BTFE.com.

Leslie Christopher
KeyPerson

How We Live Together

(Continued from page 1)

they disagreed deeply with how Gentile Christians were no longer following the laws of Moses. They disagreed not just on minor issues, but major theological and cultural differences as well.

Paul preached that there is unity in Christ and, even with the major differences that they had, they needed each other, and the world needed their witness of unity. In the midst of the current issues and divisions in our country and in the United Methodist Church, even as we as United Methodists look at separation as a solution to the issues that divide us, I prayerfully believe that Loch Raven UMC will stay united, not because we all believe the same things or come from the same cultural backgrounds, because we don't. I believe we will stay united because I see a congregation that loves Jesus, loves each other, embraces all who come to the church, and a congregation that seeks to authentically reach out to the community. Putting our focus on Jesus Christ, loving God with all our heart, soul, and mind and loving our neighbors as ourselves, that is how we live together.

Grace & Peace,
Pastor George



2020 Showtime, Fashion, Prayer Delivery

Family Movie Night

It's showtime at LRUMC in 2020! A new Outreach Committee initiative is set to premiere on Friday, February 7 (movie to be announced). Family Movie Night will be launched as a bi-monthly program 7 to 9pm in Fellowship Hall. Join us as an audience member or volunteer for hosting community families who attend. Movies with powerful positive stories have a way to bring an impact to someone's life journey at any age, to blend scripture stories with entertainment for providing a memorable evening of message and fellowship.

The Corner Hope Chest

The Corner Hope Chest Free Clothing Ministry is preparing to open and if have time to help host the Corner's "shoppers" contact Rebecca Mickey, Adelaide Wilson or Sandra Edmonds. Clothing donations are still being accepted, with items cleaned, delivered on hangars, and sizes clearly marked on the clothing.

Community Prayer Mailbox

A carryover from the Committee's 2019 suggestions list is setting up a Community Prayer Mailbox. Positive results of such boxes posted on the Internet:

St. James United Methodist Church put a prayer box outside its church. "The purpose of the box is that anyone in the community or driving by can place a prayer request in the box, and someone from the prayer committee will receive it and we - the church - will pray for them," said Delores McMillan, a member of the communication team, by email. "Since it has been there, they have been pulling at least five requests a week. Last week, they had 10 on Sunday morning."

Read more at: <https://www.theitem.com/stories/sumter-church-sets-up-community-prayer-box,20424>

Aldersgate United Methodist Church of Jackson, Tennessee set up a "drive thru prayer box" where drivers who were cutting through their parking lot could stop and write a prayer request. The church was hoping it could be a way to advertise the church to those in the area and also to pray for their community. This box brought new publicity and many prayer requests to Aldersgate.

Read more at: <https://jimbakkershow.com/news/churchs-drive-thru-prayer-box-stirs-community>

If you are handy with woodworking and can assist us by building and mounting a Community Prayer Box for our church, along Glendale bordering our parking lot so folks can do a drive through with prayer requests, please contact an Outreach Team member.

Many thanks for your support of Outreach events in 2019!

Debi Wynn

UMC Lectionary Calendar, Year A February, 2019

Black History Month

February 2 – Fourth Sunday After the Epiphany

Church Color: Green

Micah 6:1-8

Psalms 15 (UMH 747)

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Matthew 5:1-12

February 9 – Fifth Sunday After the Epiphany

Church Color: Green

Isaiah 58:1-9a, (9b-12)

Psalms 112:1-10 (UMH 833)

1 Corinthians 2:1-12

(13-16)

Matthew 5:13-20

Scouting Ministries Sunday

February 16 – Sixth Sunday After the Epiphany

Church Color: Green

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Psalms 119:1-8 (UMH 840)

1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Matthew 5:21-37

Presidents Day – February 17

February 23 – Seventh Sunday After the Epiphany; Transfiguration of the Lord

Church Color: White

Exodus 24:12-18

Psalms 99 (UMH 819)

2 Peter 1:16-21

Matthew 17:1-9

February 26

Ash Wednesday

Church Color: Purple

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Psalms 51:1-17 (UMH 785)

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

United Methodist Women February Schedule

Phyllis Downes Circle

Monday, February 3

10:00 a.m.—Parlor

Lesson 7

“Women in Christ” Circle

Monday, February 3

7:00 p.m.—Room 202

Study: *Becoming Women of Purpose*

Lesson 4—Prepared for a Purpose

Study: Jan

Devotions: Jan

Hostess: Jan

NO GENERAL MEETING

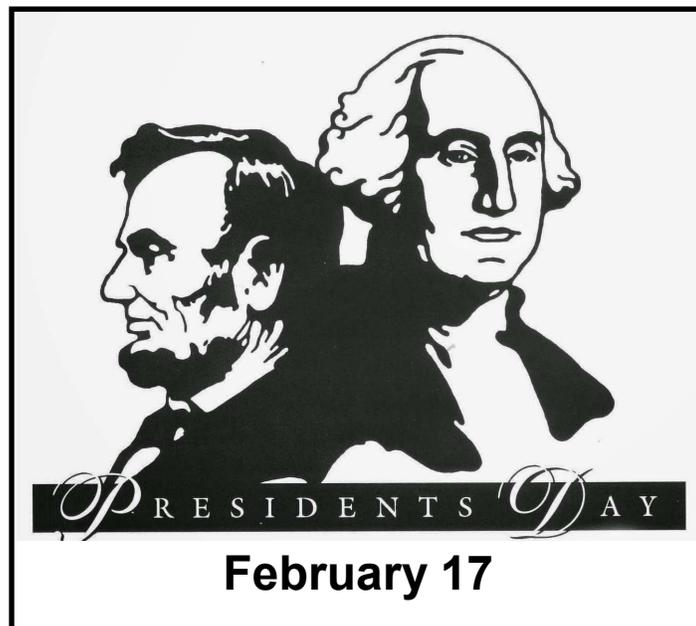


Bible Quiz

According to St. Matthew's account of the Transfiguration, when Jesus was transfigured two Old Testament characters appeared and seemed to be talking with Jesus. One represented the Law; the other represented the Prophets. Who were the two men who appeared to Jesus?

- A. Abraham and David
- B. Moses and Elijah
- C. Nathan and Ezekiel
- D. Elijah and David

The answer can be found in Matthew 17:3.





Feeding the Community

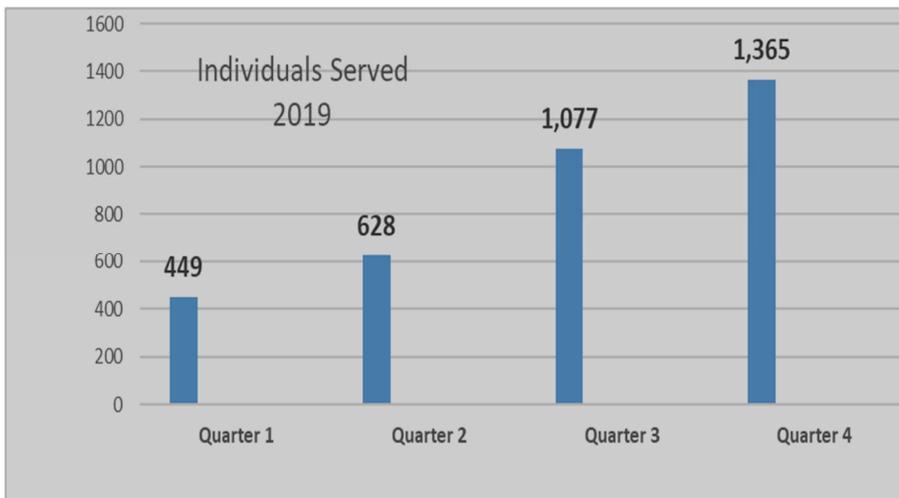
Food Pantry Update

...“Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry and feed you...” Then the King will say, “I’m telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.”

Matthew 25: 37-40 (The Message)

We are blessed to be able offer this ministry to food-insecure families in our community.

1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm



In 2019, we served 3,520 individuals.

23,907.5 pounds of food!

Just as our patrons have increased so has our need for more volunteers. If you would like to join our crew or have any questions, contact Merrill Harrison, Linda Cole, or the church office.

Please continue to pray for us and our guests, and spread the word that our pantry is open to all—including church members—who need help in putting food on their table.

Upcoming and Ongoing Mission Opportunities

Marty Marvel Food Pantry

11:00 AM to 1:00 PM 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month. February dates are the 4th and 18th.

To help serve individuals in our community who are food-insecure, 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. 15, May 16, July 11, and Oct. 10 (If you would like to volunteer to help prepare or serve breakfast, contact Linda Cole (check church directory or with the church office for telephone number).

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.

Mission Thank You Notes

Ludhiana Christian Medical College and Hospital (LCMCH)

Your congregation has been a faithful supporter of the work being done in India at the LCMCH. Your gifts through the Global Ministries Advance or through the United Methodist Committee on Relief have been substantial and provide much needed support. So this is a thank you letter. Thank you for your continued, much appreciated contribution.

I write to you as the newly appointed Executive Director of the Ludhiana CMC Board USA here in the States. As a United Methodist myself, the child and grandchild of India missionaries. I feel God's call to do His work for this cause which provides vital training and health care for thousands of individuals in north India.

This is also a request that you keep LCMCH in your prayers. There are uncertain times in many places not the least of which is India where sectarian problems, environmental issues and funding concerns present challenges. Your prayers of support for the health care professionals, the professors and students at the college are needed.

Catherine Whitcomb, PhD
Executive Director

UMC Global Ministries

Thank you from our Global Health families to yours. When you gave to the UMC's Abundant Health Initiative, you did something truly significant. Your gift supported vulnerable people around the world. In partnership with leading global organizations like the United Nations, the United Methodist Church has committed to providing life-saving interventions to 1 million children. Since 2016, the Abundant Health Initiative has reached 727,900 children. These interventions would not be possible without your help.

Dr. Graciela Salvador-Davila
Director, Global Health Unit

Heifer International

Thank you for your recent gift of \$6,269.57 to help end child hunger. It breaks my heart that children worldwide go to sleep not knowing when their next meal will be. But your generous gift gives me hope—and changes lives forever.

Each gift you make provides families in need with gifts like livestock and training—making it possible for them to earn a steady income and provide their families with three nutritious meals a day. Their children no longer feel the ache of hunger. Thanks to your compassion, they have bright and hopeful futures.

Your gift doesn't just feed a child for a day or week—it can feed a child and their family for a lifetime.

Pierre U. Ferrari
President and CEO

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Mission Thank You Notes

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Heifer also presented the Church with a Christmas cow bell ornament with this message:

Bells have been used since early Christian times to signal many things; a call to worship and unite in spirit or in celebration of lives joined together. In the United States, a bell is commonly associated with freedom.

At Heifer, we ring a cow-bell to signify the blessing of big-hearted gifts like yours that transforms lives. Your congregational gift has provided a blessing for our partner families around the world, granting them freedom from hunger and poverty.

It's generous patrons like you that bring the commandment "love your neighbor" to life. Thank you for joining our mission to end hunger and poverty in a sustainable way by investing alongside local farmers and their communities.

Missions *In Action*: Church World Service Blankets+ Program

Providing basic emergency supplies, as well as tools and resources for long-term recovery and development to communities in need.

Missions has designated Sunday, February 2nd as **Blanket Sunday**. This special giving opportunity provides hope in the form of blankets and other supplies to survivors of storms, earthquakes and other disasters.

The Blanket and Tool program also **provides financial support for a variety of projects that provide food and water, as well as resources that empower people to meet their own needs**. From seeds and tools, to wells and water systems, to technical training and small business loans, the key is people working together to identify their own development priorities, their strengths and their needs, something Church World Service has learned through some 70 years of working in partnership around the world.

Hunger is the number one risk to global health, killing more people each year than AIDS, malaria and TB combined. This outreach has a cure for hunger - food - and there is enough produced in this world to feed everyone. In many places in this world, food exists in the marketplace or could be grown in the environment but vulnerable populations lack access or resources to buy or grow the food or secure the water needed to flourish. The key to solving hunger is to address the root causes of hunger with transformational development projects that give not a hand-out, but a hand-up to our brothers and sisters in need.

The United Methodist Church is one of 37 members of the Church World Service—UMCOR Advance #982810.



Thank you to all who contributed to our Congregational Christmas Card project. We raised **\$1,095 for Lifewater Canada!**

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.



- 1 Joyce Dixon
- 4 Chad Schoelkopf
- 5 Theresa Alaeze
- 7 Bolanle Akerele
Justin Yu
- 10 Sandra Edmonds
Cherie Buszczak
- 13 Erika Stiles
- 16 Kathryn Ruble
- 19 Patricia Barbee
- 24 Titilayo Akerele
- 25 Laverne Nimmo
- 26 Adiaha Essien

From the Mailbox

To My Church Family,

Thank you for the generous love gift. I love being with our children. The gift was perfect as the Price family took a much needed vacation together. Family is so important, especially everyone at Loch Raven UMC. Thank you for sharing in my joys and concerns.

Love,
Amy Price

Thank you to everyone for the get well cards with healing prayers and thoughts, phone calls and visits by Pastor George while I was recovering from leg surgery.

Also, thanks to everyone for filling in as ushers for the church services while I'm out of service.

On behalf of Eddie, thank you to everyone for their monetary gifts for Eddie's Christmas shopping spree. Also to Peter McGinnes for being Eddie's Christmas shopping "Santa."

Rick Neumann

Dear LRUMC Family,

Thank you for your Love Gift. I am more than happy to serve my God and my church as Administrative Secretary. It warmed my heart to receive this appreciation from you all.

On behalf of my mother, I would like to thank you for your prayers, thoughts, calls, texts, and emails as she underwent the first part of her bladder cancer surgery. She is a trooper and doing very well, despite her misgivings! Please continue keeping her (and me) in your prayers as she heals from Part 1 and Part 2 occurs in February.

Thank you,
Myra

Membership Updates

To receive a copy of church directory changes from June 2019 to January 2020, contact the church office (410-825-0900; office@lrumc.org).