

The Spire



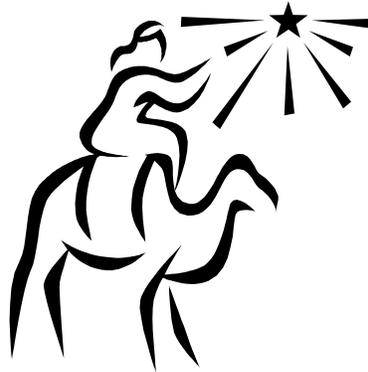
January 2011

Loch Raven United Methodist Church

Winter Study – When Christians Get It Wrong

Don't forget to sign up for the winter study *When Christians Get It Wrong*. The study book is written by Pastor Adam Hamilton, whose resources we've used before and found a blessing. This is an opportunity to understand the challenge of speaking of and living out our faith with those outside the church, particularly younger adults. The Wednesday morning class begins January 12, and the Monday evening class on January 17. See Pastor Gayle for more information.

The Epiphany of Our Lord



When Jesus was born at Bethlehem, strange visitors from the East, led by the light of a star, appeared before him, bowing down and offering him gifts.

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage". . . they set out; and there ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. (Matthew 2:1-2, 9b-11).

Who were those "astrologers" anyway? Where did they come from? Where did they disappear to? We do not know. On the level of history, the story in Matthew's Gospel is shrouded in mystery. When we move to the religious level, however, the mystery falls away. The gifts offered by the wise men—to give them their more familiar name—tells us a great deal more about the one to whom they were offered than the gifts themselves.

They gave Jesus: GOLD

As our representatives they gave to God the power of this world, as principalities and powers of this world yield to him.

(Continued on page 3)



Inside This Issue ...

Boiler Fund Update	Page 2
Board of Child Care Cookie Collection	Page 2
UMW Year-End Giving	Page 4
Beloved Community	Page 5

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

Website: www.LRUMC.org

Boiler Fund Update

A considerable milestone has been reached—\$40,000. We went over that number in December, thanks to your steady, consistent, second-mile giving. The total needed is \$73,000, so we've raced past the half-way mark on this. As you enjoy the heat in our building this winter, please continue to consider adding a little something to your offering to finish paying for our new boiler.

Special thanks to the young adult Sunday school class, led by James Manley, and some of our youth who responded to the invitation of their leader, Jen Byrd, for a leaf-raking fundraising effort in November. This was a win-win situation. Those of us who participated (they were willing to let a couple of older folks like the Annis-Forders help) got great exercise on a lovely, crisp fall day. The folks whose yards were cleaned up received a service, and it promoted goodwill toward our church in the Loch Raven Village community, besides raising close to \$400 for the boiler. Well done!

Board of Child Care News

Cookie Collection Time

The New Year will provide an opportunity to support the Board of Child Care.

We have been asked to donate cookies for the girls and boys who live on the Board of Child Care campus. A box will be placed in Fellowship Hall from January 16 until February 13 if you would like to help. Store-bought cookies are preferred. Some of the children have food allergies and the staff can check the ingredients in store-bought cookies.

This year they are also accepting granola bars, cereal bars and other healthier snacks in individual packages.

Thank you for your continued support of the children at the Board of Child Care.

Leslie Christopher
 Keyperson



The Epiphany of Our Lord

(Continued from page 1)

They gave Jesus: FRANKINCENSE

In that offering the wise men hand over life's mysteries to Christ, and in that gift they also hand over our own personal and secret hiddenness as it is yielded to the light of his divine presence.

They gave Jesus: MYRRH

That gift represents a death in some part of our soul that needs to yield to the divine presence, a death that remains unanointed. Standing for our rebellious humanity the wise men kneel in humility and hand over to God our own death to self-centeredness, arrogance and pride and nourishing resentments.

In this season of God's making known to us of God as a personal God, we are helped to open up and make ourselves known to him. What do we hold onto as sovereign in our lives? What do we hold in our own power, control and dominion? What is yours or mine that no one else, even God, can have? What in your life and mine must yet be yielded to the sovereignty and dominion of God? We need to see that there is something within us that we cling to. There is a secret that we hold on to. There is a death in our soul that remains unanointed and unredeemed. All of us, in the journeys of our lives, hold onto treasures that must yet be given over to God in order that they no longer possess us.

This is a season of traveling—of movement. The sacred and mysterious journey of God's servant-wise-men asks the question of us: "Where do we yet need to move in our relationship with you God?" What do we jealously hold in our personal power that needs to be handed over to the Sovereign power of all life—God's Son, Our Savior, Christ the Lord? What gift can we give you God, during this time of Christmas-Epiphany.

*What can I give him,
poor as I am?*

*If I were a shepherd,
I would bring a lamb;*

*If I were a wise man,
I would do my part;*

Yet what I can I give him. . . GIVE MY HEART.

Peace,
Pastor Fringo

Thank You!

Team leaders Pastor Gayle and Dick Annis-Forder, along with team members Lynne, Jeannie, Ken and Megan, thank the church family of Loch Raven for your generous support of the Baltimore Regional UM Volunteers in Mission team to Haiti, Dec. 9-17, 2010. We are all grateful for your support; the hugs, dollars, prayers and notes extended. We look forward to the sharing with you about the good work being done by the church in Haiti and UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief).

For surely
I KNOW THE
plans
I have for
YOU,
says (the)
Lord...
TO GIVE YOU A
future
WITH
Hope.
Jeremiah 29:11, NRSV

United Methodist Women Year-End Giving

Thanks to all who supported the United Methodist Women during 2010 with your pledges and support of our various fundraising projects. As a result, UMW was able to donate a total of \$2,700 to the following organizations:

Board of Child Care	\$300
Carpenter's Kitchen	100
Quality of Life Retreats	150
Manna House	150
Heart's Place	300
Ellen Hoover (Missionary)	200
Sue Porter (Missionary)	400
The Wesley (Endowment Fund)	150
Asbury Methodist Village	150
N.M. Carroll Home	150
Habitat for Humanity	250
Boiler Fund	100
Lifewater Canada (Haiti Well)	300

News from Nick

Pastor Gayle heard from our former organist Nick Bergin and he had good news. Nick visited his Dad and friends in Sweden in December, playing some recitals there. He returned to his new position as interim assistant organist at the Episcopal Cathedral in Indianapolis, as he continues work on his master's degree at Indiana University. This position is quite an honor for a young organist. Congratulations Nick!

United Methodist Women January Schedule

Prepared by Betty Shock

"Women in Christ" Circle

Monday, January 3

7:30 p.m.—Room 202

Study: *Growing Through
Life's Challenges*

Lesson 9—Growing Through
Perplexing Situations

Phyllis Downes Circle

Tuesday, January 4

10 am—Parlor

Study: John II

NO GENERAL MEETING

Membership Updates

Change of Address:

Patricia Hinkel
6437 Cloister Gate Drive
Baltimore, MD 21212

Donna Welsh
909 Ellendale Drive
Towson, MD 21286

Verna Wilson
4085 A Tennessee Avenue
Nashville, TN 37209

Deceased Members:

Rachel Robinson
Bernard Williamson-Taylor

Address Unknown:

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

John Daniels
Aleyamma John



From the Mailbox

We really miss all our friends at Loch Raven. The church here is very welcoming, but it's hard to remember all the names! Hope to be back to visit some time.

Adele Mueller

The United Methodist Church
Washington Area
Baltimore-Washington
Conference

November 16, 2010

Grace and peace in the name
of Jesus Christ!

We, the bishops of The United Methodist Church, feel compelled to renew our commitment to work to become the beloved community of Christ. We, as a Council, desire to deal with the crucial and critical issues of racism and the sacredness of every human being. Therefore, as the spiritual and administrative leaders of the church, we issue an urgent call to the whole people of God, lay and clergy: to speak the truth in love in public and private discourse, to act with compassion, and to work for peace and justice in the world.

In order to transform the world, in faithfulness to Christ's command, we must model respect and kindness and extinguish the fires of animosity. And thus, we call on all churches to engage in genuinely honest dialogue and respectful conversation, such that others who observe the action in our lives might declare "See how they love each other!"

As people of faith, we are charged to build the beloved community because Christ has broken down the dividing walls and ended the hostilities between us. Yet, we continue to build walls in the church and in the world which separate us and cause our hearts to grieve.

On the continent of Africa and in many parts of Asia, including the Middle East, the Philippines and India, the his-

torical and contemporary impact of colonialism, racism, tribalism, hostility and religious persecution continue to affect human relationships.

The challenge in the Philippines is to break down the barriers between mainline society and tribal peoples. Meeting this challenge will accord equal rights such as land possession and free education for all.

By nature, colonialism in Africa thrives on hostile, violent and demeaning human relationships. Racism and tribalism cut deep wounds, not in



one's flesh and blood, but also on the soul and the spirit. These gaping wounds leave permanent scars.

In Europe racism is a growing issue, with political parties openly working against minority, ethnic and religious communities. Prejudice is overtly articulated in the media, in politics and even in churches.

Throughout the United States, there has been a rapid escalation of violence related to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and religious preference. This escalation includes personal attacks, bullying and vi-

olent and criminal acts of violence to the mind, body and spirit of persons. These actions diminish life for the victims and their families, as well as for the perpetrators and the whole community. They are the ultimate insidious and irreverent attacks on the sacredness of God-given life.

Across the world, terrorism -- as demonstrated by wanton acts of violence against innocent persons -- leaves a trail of loss of life, limb, home and community. Discriminatory treatment is widely practiced against immigrants and refugees everywhere around the world. All of this creates a universal atmosphere of suspicion, mistrust and fear. Often this is the result of religious persecution of various faith communities, including Christians, which threatens the capacity or hope for reconciliation and peace. The church is called to decisively and directly counter these acts and engender and empower a "perfect love that casts out all fear." (1 John 4:18, NRSV) Through intentional action we can "overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:21, NRSV)

It is incumbent upon the bearers of this vision of a beloved community to do whatever we can today to hasten the day of a just world with peace. This is our hope, our prayer and our commitment.

John R. Schol, Bishop
Washington Area of the United
Methodist Church
Baltimore-Washington
Conference

Larry Goodpastor, Bishop
President of the Council
of Bishops
The United Methodist Church