

# *Linden Letter*

## *Linden Heights United Methodist Church*

*June/July 2019*

***Mission Statement:** To be a community of prayer, love, and forgiveness committed to leading persons to a living relationship with Jesus Christ and reaching out in acts of compassion and service.*

### *A Note from the Pastor*

Mark 10:13-16 (NRSV) *People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.*

One of the many things that I love about Linden Heights is the way that we love and care for children and youth. We have a wonderful Sunday school program that teaches our children and youth about God and God's love. Our children's choir that blesses us with their offering of music once a month. We have the drama group, A.W.E., that blesses us with their offerings several times a year. Our youth group that meets to encourage and support middle and high school children in the difficult tween and teen years. Our Vacation Bible School program immerses children in messages about God for an entire week. All of this is wonderful! You show your love for the children of our church and our community by supporting all of these wonderful programs.

However, you do even more! You welcome children and youth into worship. You understand that children are not the future of the church, they are already here and present. You show our love for our children and youth by encouraging them and supporting them when they read scripture, help serve communion, take up our offering, greet people at the door, and give their gifts in church. It may not seem obvious at first, but the way that we encourage children of all ages to be in worship and to participate in worship makes a difference in their lives. By welcoming children into worship, we let them know that they are welcome into a relationship with God too.

This summer, our children will be worshiping with us at all of our summer services. I encourage you to take this opportunity to get to know a family that you do not already know. Introduce yourself to the parents or guardians. Introduce yourself to the children and teenagers

Sit next to a family whom you have not sat next to before. Enjoy the blessing of worshipping together as a church family!

I have included in this newsletter a letter that I have written to parents, guardians, and grandparents encouraging them to worship with their children this summer. I think that it is a good reminder for all of us that worshipping with children is not always easy, but it is so very important. I ask that you take a moment to read through it and then say a prayer for all of the children who will worship with us this summer.

I pray that we all enjoy wonder filled worship this summer!

Pastor Alicia

### **A Letter to: Parents, grandparents, and guardians, (and church family)**

When you bring your children to worship, you are doing something really important. I know it's not easy, I've been there. I know what it is like to struggle at home with the battles over breakfast food and outfits. I know the crying of a child in a car seat and the arguing that siblings do the minute they are sitting next to each other in a car. I know that you often come to church already tired. I watch you try to keep the baby quiet and then wince as your child cries. I see you pull things out of your bag to try to distract and entertain your child. I watch you cringe when your child asks a question in a voice that is not a whisper. Not everyone is looking, but I know it sometimes feels that way. I know, because I have been there too.

I know you're wondering if it is worth it and why you bother. I know that you sometimes leave church more exhausted than fulfilled. But what you are doing is *so* important. When you and your children are here, the church is filled with a joyful noise. When you are here, the Body of Christ is more fully present. When you are here, our family is more complete.

By worshipping with you, with us, your children learn that they matter to God. They learn that they belong to this family of believers. They learn that worshipping God is something that they do too. They learn the traditions of our faith, the songs, the hymns, and the prayers. They get to be a part of Holy Communion and be fed at the table.

When I see you and your children in church, you may think that I see fidgety, noisy kids, but I don't. I promise you, I don't. You may think that your children bother us or disrupt worship. They don't. I promise you, they don't. What I see is young disciples being taught how to live out their faith. I see children anxious to hear the words, sing the songs, say the prayers and come forward for communion. I see children reminding us that God created our bodies to move and that the scriptures are full of stories about people moving and dancing as they worship God. I see children and adults who are not related by blood or marriage becoming family as they pass the peace. Every study recently done on children who grow up to be adults that worship in a church says that intergenerational church matters, it makes a difference. Children who worship as part of a congregation are more likely to become adults who worship as part of a congregation.

I want you to know that you matter and that your children matter. They are welcome here, they are wanted here, and most importantly, they are loved here. They are welcome with their toys and snacks, with their questions and their fidgeting. They are welcome with their cries and their temper tantrums. They are welcome when they are well behaved and when they are not.

So please, come with your children. Worship with us. Be the church with us. Make a joyful noise with us. Remember that Jesus said “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.” If you have questions or concerns, please ask me. I am happy to talk with you and with your children.

Pastor Alicia

## Children & Youth

### **Vacation Bible School - June 25-29, 2019 8:45 a.m.- 12:00 noon**

“Roar! Life is Wild! God is Good.!”

There is still time for kids, youth and adults to register for VBS.

Discover that even though life gets wild, God is good. Our crews will experience God’s love as they explore different Bible stories, learn verses, make crafts, play games, sing songs, and gain friends! There will be a free Adult VBS class in the parlor each morning of VBS week.

Registration forms are available at the Linden Heights UMC website ([www.lindenheights.org](http://www.lindenheights.org)) or in the church office. The cost is \$25 per child or \$45 per family.

We need adult and youth (exiting grade 6 and above) helpers during the week of VBS.

The congregation is invited for a closing celebration at 11:15 a.m. on Friday, June 29. This is a wonderful way for us to reach young families in our community.

Donations toward the cost of VBS are always welcomed.

If you wish to volunteer for one day or more, or have any questions, please talk to our director Barbara Yingling or Pastor Alicia (410-668-6181).

**VBS Youth Service Project: The youth will once again have the opportunity to participate in an extended VBS program** after 12 pm. We will gather for lunch (please bring a brown bag lunch) and then spend some time studying the scripture lesson of the day, talking about how it applies to our lives here and now. We will then engage in a community service activity. We will return to the church no later than 5 pm.

## Mission & Outreach

In December 2018, we announced that the Missions Ministry Team, co-led by Alicia McBride, Connie Simmons and Debbie Gorsche, would be researching needs in our community to enable us to be more intentional and responsive to those immediate needs. Thanks to your generosity and based on that research, following are the areas we've been able to impact so far this year:

- A large number of hats, gloves, scarves and socks were delivered to Pine Grove Middle School
- Food was donated to Christus Victor food pantry
- Breakfast was served at Manna House
- 18 large bags of "grab and go" foods were collected and delivered to Pine Grove Middle School and Parkville High School
- Shorts, pants and undergarments were collected and delivered to Pine Grove Elementary School
- Disposable diapers, disposable training pants and baby wipes have been collected for the new Eastern Family Resource Center, which serves women, children and men in the Parkville/Carney area

### **June Mission/Collection:**

During the month of June we will continue collecting the following items for the Eastern Family Resource Center: Disposable Diapers (i.e. Pampers) – Newborn to size 6, Disposable training pants (i.e. pull-ups) boys & girls sizes 2T to 6T, Baby wipes – regular and sensitive skin. **Due to the center's great need, the list of collection items will also include bars of soap, washcloths and towels (new and slightly used).**

**Also during the month of June, we will collect seeds for Uganda.** The next planting season is September to mid-December.

**We will be serving breakfast on June 29<sup>th</sup> at Manna House.** We can always use a hand with shopping, cooking, delivering, serving and clean up.

## Worship

This coming Sunday we begin our summer worship series "Songs of our Faith." We will be exploring hymns, spirituals, and contemporary music throughout the summer, looking at how the songs shape, inform, and express our faith. Some of the songs will be familiar and some will be brand new. We will also explore the lives of some of the composers and the stories behind some of the songs to see what we might learn from them. I hope that you will join me for a music filled summer!

## Ways to Serve

**Office Help Needed!!** It would be good for us to have all of our membership records in an electronic format. If we have records saved this way, and something happens to the paper copies, we do not lose all of our information. An electronic format also makes it easier for us to

find information when people call. For example, baptism records are considered legal documents, and we do get calls asking us for copies of people's records. It often takes us days to go through all of the books and records in order to locate an individual. If you would be willing to donate some time to this effort this summer, please let the pastor know! You would need to come into the office (records are not supposed to leave the building) and enter data onto our church computer. It isn't hard, but it is time consuming! Work doesn't have to happen only during the daytime, we can be flexible!

**Pew Tenders:** Our pew tenders straighten up the pews and prepare the space for the next worship service. Duties include making sure that all of the hymnals are where they belong, picking up any trash on the pews or on the floor, and making sure that the pew holders have offering envelopes, pencils, etc. Pew tenders usually serve once every other month. If you would be willing to serve as a pew tender please mark the Opportunities to Serve sheet or call Kathy in the church office at 410-668-6181.

## Other Church News

### Flea Market Thank You

God blessed us with a beautiful day for this year's flea market. I would like to thank everyone who made a donation to the Linden Heights' table, the food table or those who volunteered their time at the flea market. My special thanks to Ruth Snyder, Barb Yingling, John Smell and Lorna Bills for helping me with all of the organization. Another special thanks to Kathy Yantis in the church office who takes all the vendor calls and relays them to me. I couldn't do the flea market without all of the volunteers who support our church. With all of your hard work, we made approximately \$2,000.00 this year, which will go to the general fund.  
Debbie Singer

### General Conference, Judicial Council & Annual Conference

Much has been going on in our denomination over the past 6 months. I have talked with you about the outcome of the Special General Conference in February, but we have not yet talked about the rulings of the Judicial Council or the events of the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference. Instead of a lengthy written report, I am going to hold an information session on July 9<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. We will meet in the sanctuary and I will have charts, graphs, handouts, etc. to try to help us navigate all of the information. If you are interested in learning about any of these meetings before we gather on the 9<sup>th</sup>, you can find information on the Conference website at [www.bwcumc.org](http://www.bwcumc.org)

Pastor Alicia