

Linden Letter

Linden Heights United Methodist Church December 2018

Isaiah 12: 2 Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid, for the Lord God is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation.

This week begins the mad rush of the “holiday season.” It starts with the Thanksgiving food shopping and preparations which leads into parades, football, and turkey dinners. Before dinner has been cleaned up, the dash for black Friday shopping begins as people run to the stores in search of the best bargains. Small business Saturday, cyber Monday, and giving Tuesday all compete for our attention and our dollars. Decorations for Christmas go up, lights are strung, children visit Santa at the mall, cookies get baked, and gifts are wrapped. Many arrive at Christmas morning a little tired, worn out, and stressed, but the joy of unwrapping packages, seeing family, and another large meal soon consume us. A few days later we celebrate New Year’s Eve. The ball drops in Times Square, we throw confetti, toasts are made, and we make resolutions that will fade before the end of the month. It is a crazy, hectic, fun, stressful, time of the year filled with all kinds of emotions.

For us Christians, I think that the passage above from Isaiah can be an anchor for us in this busy and hurried season. It reminds us that we do not belong to the world or the holidays, rather we belong to God. This passage speaks of who God is to us- our strength, our might, and our salvation. When I read this passage, I find assurance, hope, quiet, and peace. When I read this passage, I pray that others may come to know the peace and comfort that comes from having a relationship with God. In these next few, busy weeks, we have the opportunity to speak the message of Christ’s birth into the world. We have the privilege of showing others the depth of love that God has for them. We get the joy of spreading peace to those around us. We have the chance to help others know God’s strength, might, and salvation- all born in a stable long ago.

How can we do this? Here are a few possibilities. Give a candy bar to a person working at a cash register. Give a cup of coffee or hot chocolate to someone working out in the cold. Invite someone to worship. Be a part of the ministry teams here at church that make the Living Nativity and Christmas Eve worship services possible. Talk to a homeless person or give him or her a meal. Help out some frazzled parents by entertaining their children for an hour or so. These are just a few examples of how we can make a difference in the world around us and of how we can speak God’s love to others.

I hope and pray that you have a wonderful, joy filled Advent season as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our savior.

God’s peace be with you!

Pastor Alicia

Mission & Outreach



December Collections



In December, we will be handing out and filling up Red Stockings for the Board of Child Care of the United Methodist Church. The BCC has been meeting the needs of vulnerable and at-risk children since 1874. They have a variety of programs that include foster care, adoption services, treatment for children who have been victims of trauma, unaccompanied minors whose lives are in jeopardy in Central America while they go through the immigration process, youth with autism, youth with development disorders or mental health illnesses, early education for children living in poverty, and much more. They have day programs as well as residential programs. You can get more information about the work of the Board of Child Care at their website www.boardofchildcare.org.

In December we will also collect scarves, gloves, hats, and new socks for the homeless and the poor in our community and in Baltimore City. The donations may be adult or child sized. Items that would be appropriate for a middle school aged child will be taken to Pine Grove Middle School.

Mission Overview: Over the past 12 years our congregation has donated over \$120,000 to various mission projects. These projects include:

Baltimore Christian Work Camp	Carpenter's Kitchen	Habitat for Humanity
Henderson Settlement	Manna House	World Vision Child
Operation Christmas Child	Thanksgiving Meals	Youth Mission Camp Cecil
County Net Ministries	Haiti Relief	Back to School Supplies
Mission Trip to Haiti	Hurricane Isabelle Relief	Tsunami Relief
Iraq Troop Supplies	Bikes for the World	Hurricane Katrina Relief
Pakistan Relief	One Great Hour of Sharing	World Communion Sunday
Peace for Justice Sunday	Helping UP Mission	Native American Sunday
Davis AME Church assistance	UM Student Sunday	Imagine No Malaria
Ronald McDonald House	Heifer International	Health kits
Hearts Place Shelter	Christus Victor Food Pantry	Hurricane Sandy relief
Our Youth Group Rock Trip	Baby Supplies	Scarves, gloves, hats
Angle Tree, Prison Ministries	Home for Christmas	Sierra Leone Relief
LoveLace Missionaries	Hurricane Harvey	Africa University
Uganda- Bibles, seeds, shoes, supplies	Henderson Settlement Mission Trip	
Local evictions, food, turn off notices	Kennedy Krieger Festival of Trees	
Youth Mission Trip to Manassas, Va	Christian Freedom International	
Brown-Whale UM Missionaries	More than 275 bag lunches for the homeless	
Homestead UMC Thanksgiving/Christmas	Parkville-Carney Assistance Network	
Patapsco UMC assistance- Dundalk Senior assistance, food & supplies		
Deaf/Blind Summer Camp at West River Flood buckets		

Worship News



Journey to Bethlehem: This year we will be having a new Advent prayer and worship opportunity. Journey to Bethlehem will be much like the Lenten Stations of the Cross. We will have several stations throughout the sanctuary with scripture readings, an interactive, meditative activity, and artwork that tell the story of Jesus' birth. If you would like to create a piece of art for Journey to Bethlehem, please let the pastor know. All art work needs to be completed and to the pastor by December 14th. Journey to Bethlehem will be open at various times the week of December 16th.

Christmas Poinsettias: It is time to order Christmas Poinsettias for Christmas Eve. We originally need all orders by November 25th, **but we have been able to extend the order until Sunday, December 2nd.** Due to the limits of our distributor, we will not be able to accept orders after December 2nd. Please use the order form in the bulletin or contact Kathy in the office at lindenheightsumc.org or 410-668-6181.



Decorating the church for Advent will take place on Nov. 27th at 9:30 am.

If you or your family would like to light the candles on the Advent Wreath and do a short reading, please contact Pastor Alicia.

Family First Sunday is December 2nd.

We will have one, combined, worship service at **10 am**. We will not have Sunday school that morning, but there will be activities for the children in worship.

Christmas Pageant: The children and adults will present the Christmas story in music and drama on Sunday, **December 9th at a combined 10 am worship service**. Children will rehearse in Sunday school over the next few weeks. ***In addition, we will have a rehearsal after the 10 am worship service on Dec. 2nd.*** We would love to have all of our children participate! Please mark your calendars for these rehearsals. If you have questions, please talk with Ruth Snyder.

Something To Comfort, Calm And Renew You This Advent Season!

Calming Down Christmas (Resting in God, Advent Edition)

Wednesday, December 12 at 7:00 p.m. in the Parlor followed by **communion, anointing and prayer** from Pastor Alicia in the Sanctuary.

This is a special time of prayer designed to give you a chance to place the demands of the season on hold, calm your mind and enter into God's strength, peace and blessing.

Scripture is read. Lighting is subdued. Sacred instrumental music is played in the background. There are some periods of silence for uninterrupted time with your Lord and Savior. It has become a beloved part of our Advent celebration at Linden Heights for some. Perhaps it will become yours, too?

Take a stand against all that disturbs your peace and enter God's!

"In quietness & trust is your strength." Isaiah 30:15

For more details, you may contact Alicia McBride of the Prayer & Healing Group at 410-668-0392 or aliciamcb@verizon.net.

Living Nativity

If you have never participated in a Living Nativity, this is the year to try it! This takes place on **Saturday, December 15th from 5:30-7 pm**. The tableaux presentations will take place **at 5:40 and 6:20**. We will have live animals, serve hot cocoa and cookies, and present the story of Jesus' birth through words and music. There will be carol singing, fire pits, and an open sanctuary for prayer. We can use cookie and cocoa donations and people to help serve them; volunteers to act and help with costume changing; animal caretakers and fire pit tenders; readers and greeters. Sign up on the bulletin insert to help present the birth of Jesus to our neighbors, families and friends. Come join us, help out where you can!

The Advent and Christmas season can be difficult for many people. Grief, physical or mental illnesses, loneliness, fear, struggles with family or friends, and losses of all kinds can be difficult to handle. It gets even harder when it feels like everyone else is filled with joy and celebrating. **We will have a Blue Christmas worship service on December 16th at 3 pm** for those who are going through a difficult time this season. Please consider joining us for this healing service if you are struggling. Please consider inviting someone that you know who is going through a hard time and come with them.

Advent Prayer Vigil: We will have a new look to our Prayer Vigil this year. Due to safety concerns and the **need to secure the building daily, we will have the Prayer Vigil on Sunday, December 9th, from 9 am-9 pm**. The parlor will be open during worship and the luncheon for prayer and meditation. The sanctuary will be open at all other times. If you prefer, prayer and meditation can also be done in your own home anytime during that day. Pray that our Advent activities bring peace and solace to all this Advent season. Prayer cards will be available in the parlor and sanctuary if you care to use them. Let each of us take some quiet time to pray for our friends and families. May we all make this a holy season.

Christmas Eve Worship services will be held on Dec. 24th at three different times.

1 pm– We will have a traditional service with communion and candle lighting.

4 pm– We will have an informal, family (child friendly) worship service. Battery operated candles will be available for children. Children and youth will play a special role in the service.

9 pm– We will have a traditional worship service with candle lighting . Our handbell and vocal choirs will present music.

Extra greeters, ushers, parking lot attendants, readers, and communion servers are needed for our Christmas Eve worship services. If you would like to serve on one of our hospitality teams or in the worship service, please let Pastor Alicia know!

Youth Ministries

In October, the youth went to First Fruits farm to help harvest potatoes for the Maryland Food Bank. Together, with other local groups, we collected 17,000 pounds of potatoes!

In November, the youth baked chocolate chip and oatmeal raisin cookies from scratch. They all took bags of cookies and will be handing them out to cashiers and store clerks who have to work on Thanksgiving and black Friday.

Family Ministries

Our next Family Night will be December 2nd 6:30 pm. This event will include making Christmas cards for our shut in members as well as the people at Manna House. We will also have a White Elephant gift exchange. People are asked to bring an item from their home (wrapped) that they would like to regift for the White Elephant game. Refreshments will be served. If you would like to help set up, clean up, or provide refreshments, please fill out the Opportunities sheet and drop it in the offering plate, or email the pastor at alicialhumc@verizon.net.



Advent Church Luncheon

Come join your church family on Sunday 12/9, for our Advent Celebration. After the 10 am worship service we will have a “potluck” luncheon. We will have a few activities to do while waiting for lunch to begin. Feel free to invite friends and other family members – just include them in your count on the sign-up list. If you can help with food, supplies or time (to set-up or clean-up), please contact Sarah Hamlin or sign up on the bulletin insert.

Thank You!

From Dan O'Neil to the Church.

I want to thank everyone who donated seeds for the Mary Lee O'Neil Kids Farm in Lugala Uganda. The farm will receive close to 300 packs of a huge variety of vegetables and fruit. Lugala is located very close to the equator where the soil is very rich. The harvest in 2017 was 585 lbs of corn. So far this year we have harvested 1600 lbs of corn (maize). *God is Good.*

Another Thank You to everyone who attended the Beatles Night. I think a good time was had by many. The donations received were generous and went directly to www.childcrisiscenteruganda.org to help make progress on completing the Lugala Community School of Learning. Managed by Lugala United Methodist Church.
From Acts 20:35 ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ Amen

Thank You to everyone who helped make our Trunk or Treat a success this year. We had over 100 children and their families come through for candy, activities, and a safe environment in which to celebrate Halloween. A good time was had by all!

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the purchase of our new keyboard. We are grateful that we were able to raise the funds so quickly in order to get the keyboard in time for the Advent and Christmas seasons. Thank you!!

Conference Announcements

Bishop Easterling, our bishop, will be gathering with people in the Baltimore Suburban district (us) on December 9th from 3-5 pm at Fallston UMC. She will be presenting information on the Commission on the Way Forward and General Conference 2019. She will also be answering questions. Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend.

December Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2) 10 am Combined Worship 11 am Pageant Practice 6:30 pm Family Night	3) 7 pm A.W.E. Bible Study	4) 6:30 pm Men's Group Family Support	5) 6:30 pm Prayer & Healing Class	6) 7 pm Handbells 8 pm Choir	7)	8)
9) 9 am-9 pm Prayer Vigil 10 am Combined Worship- Pageant 11 am Pot Luck Luncheon 3-5 pm Bishop on our District 6:30 pm Youth Group	10) 7 pm A.W.E. Bible Study	11) 6:30 pm Men's Group Family Support	12) 7 pm Resting in God	13) 7 pm Handbells 8 pm Choir	14) 6:30 pm Youth Group	15) 3:30 pm Set up for Living Nativity 5:30-7 Living Nativity
16) 9:15 am Sunday School Worship 11 am Worship 3 pm Blue Christmas Service	17) 7 pm A.W.E. Bible Study Journey to Bethlehem Stations 12-7	18) 6:30 pm Men's Group Family Support Journey to Bethlehem Stations 12-7	19) 6:30 pm Prayer & Healing Class Journey to Bethlehem Stations 12-7	20) 7 pm Handbells 8 pm Choir Journey to Bethlehem Stations 12-7	21) Journey to Bethlehem Stations 12-7	22)
23) 9:15 am Sunday School Worship 11 am Worship	24) 1 pm Traditional Service 4 pm Family Service 9 pm Traditional Service	25) Merry Christmas!!	26)	27)	28)	29)
30) 10 am Combined Service No Sunday School						