

My brothers and sisters in Christ:

What are your plans for Christmas?

Shopping? Baking? Decorating? Wrapping gifts? Visiting your family? Attending extra worship services?

During the busy holiday season, each of us has our “to do” list that helps us keep on track. We harbor the notion that if we plan far enough ahead, then we will certainly be ready when Christmas arrives.

But the Biblical characters that we meet during Advent and Christmas remind us that God has an irritating habit of interrupting our well-thought-out plans.

Zechariah and Elizabeth plan to retire when God interrupts their lives with news of a child. They end up cashing in their 401K for a cradle,

Mary and Joseph are planning a traditional wedding to be held at an appropriate time but God interrupts their plans and they take the fast track to the altar.

The shepherds settle in for another monotonous night of sheep-tending when the stars explode with singing angels who disrupt their plans for a peaceful evening.

The Wise Men follow a star in search of a King but God interrupts their plans and takes them on a journey to a stable and a baby.

These stories and so many others remind us that God is not a giant Santa Claus in the sky who simply gives us whatever we happen to want. God loves us too much to do that. God has plans and desires for us, which are usually different than our own. If we allow room for God to break into our orderly lives, then it is quite possible that God can give birth to something new in us.

The ultimate goal in life is not to do what we want. The ultimate goal in life is to do what God wants us to do with this one wild and precious life we have been given. When we follow God’s calling, we will find that God’s plans for our lives are far better than our own.

As you read this Newsletter you will find that our church has planned many fun, engaging and spirit filled opportunities for the Advent and Christmas season: Advent services, a night of Advent fun for our children, a Christmas concert by our choir, a Christmas pageant by our children, a “Blue Christmas” healing service, and two Candlelight Christmas Eve services. I hope that you will put all of these events on your calendar. But the true message of Christmas will be missed if you don’t keep your spirit open for the surprising ways that God is breaking into your life.

*COME THOU LONG EXPECTED JESUS, BORN TO SET THY PEOPLE FREE; FROM OUR FEARS, AND SINS,
RELEASE US LET US FIND OUR REST IN THEE.*

May this Advent hymn become an Advent prayer as you surrender your hopes, dreams, plans and fears into the hands of God.

In God’s peace,

Pastor Karen

December/January Highlights

Sunday, December 7	10:15 AM - 1:00 PM	Family First Sunday/Coffee Hour
Sunday, December 7	4:00 PM	Christmas Concert
Friday, December 12	6:00 - 8:00 PM	Youth Christmas "Advent"ure
Saturday, December 13	9:00 - 10:00 PM	Rehearsal for Sunday school pageant (no pre-K)
Wednesday, December 17	7:00 PM	Blue Christmas/Longest Night Service
Saturday, December 20	1:00 - 2:30 PM	Rehearsal for Sunday school pageant (all ages) followed by Christmas party
Sunday, December 21	11:00 AM service	Sunday school pageant
Sunday, January 4 Epiphany Sunday	9:15 AM	Confirmation Class Begins
Monday, January 5	7:00 PM	Monday Night Prayer Group Begins
Tuesday, January 6	6:30 AM	Men's Bible Study Begins
Friday, January 9	7:00 PM - 9:00 PM	Youth Epiphany Party
Wednesday, January 22	7:00 PM	Healing Service
Saturday, January 24	9:00 AM	Visioning Retreat



Christmas Eve Services

Family Service 7:00 PM

Candlelight Service 9:00 PM

New Website

Linden Heights has a new and improved website at www.lindenheights.org. Jim Hedgespeth, Alicia McBride, and Jeff Lawrence have been working to create a website with an attractive design that is appealing and provides useful information to Linden Heights and other people browsing the Internet. This is one more way Linden Heights UMC can advertise who we are and what our church is about.

Our web team is always open to comments, suggestions, and new ideas concerning the content of the website. It has been a pleasure working with Alicia and Jeff the past few months and look forward to continue working on the website.

Jim Hedgespeth
410-493-7569
jim@hedgespeth.net

Operation Christmas Child

Thank you to all who donated shoe boxes and goodies for our Operation Christmas Child project. Because of your generosity we were able to pack 86 boxes. Our Missions Committee will be covering the cost of shipping. We thank you.

Also, thank you to the Sunday school students, teachers, Bell Choir, and other

adults who did a great job packing. We had fun too! We delivered our boxes to the Chick-Fil-A in White Marsh for shipping. In return they gave us 86 coupons for a free chicken sandwich. We will share these with our Sunday school students and our friends who are receiving Thanksgiving bags. Many lives will be blessed by this project! God is good!

- Ruth Snyder

Church Visioning Retreat

The Church Council will be having its annual visioning retreat on Saturday, January 24. All members of the congregation are invited to attend this retreat to help plan Linden Heights' vision for 2009.

Welcome to our New Members

On November 9, 2008 the following disciples were received into membership at Linden Heights:

Lorraine & Bill London
11630 Glen Arm Road
Glen Arm, MD 21057

Nancy Bayle
1 Cedarburg Court, Apt. C
Baltimore, MD 21234

Vincent & Joan Ingalla
4301 Slater Avenue
Nottingham, MD 21236

Penelope Baker
2921 Glendale Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21234

Amelia Woods
3506 Linbelle Terrace
Parkville, MD 21234

Jim Hedgespeth
8634 David Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21234

Christmas Greetings

Linden Heights provides two ways to send Christmas greetings to your church family. There will be a mailbox in the narthex for Christmas cards starting on November 30. After the cards are sorted, please check the box to see if you have any cards addressed to you.

Or, use the "Alternative Christmas Cards" to send holiday greetings. Save time, money and still send good wishes to your church family. Christmas greetings with names listed will be placed as an insert in the Christmas Eve bulletins. The cost is \$5.00. Please make checks payable to Linden Heights UMC.

Order forms are available in the narthex or contact Debbie in the church office. The deadline for alternative Christmas cards is December 4.



"What Sweeter Music" Christmas Concert

Mark your calendars now for this year's Christmas concert at Linden Heights, titled "What Sweeter Music" which will take place on December 7, 2008 at 4 p.m. The concert will feature the Chancel Choir, Joyful Sounds Handbell Choir and guest harpist Jacqueline Pollauf. Tickets are not required, but a free-will offering will be taken. The concert will be followed by a light reception. Plan to attend and enjoy an afternoon of beautiful music to welcome the Christ child.



Pageant Reminders

Rehearsal dates are December 13 at 9:00 AM (no 3 or 4 year olds) and December 20 at 1:00 PM (all ages). The Sunday school Christmas party follows at 2:30 PM.

Pageant is Sunday, December 21 at the 11:00 AM service. Please invite your family and friends.

If your child has a costume, please make any adjustments, press it and bring to the December 20 rehearsal with their name pinned to it. Thank you.

Mitten Trees

The mitten trees are up in the breezeway and ready for decorations! Besides mittens, we are collecting hats, scarves, socks and underwear. All sizes from child's small to adult large are needed. The trees will be decorated with the mittens but the other items will be collected in baskets surrounding the bottom of the trees. Please lend a helping hand to those less fortunate.

Youth Activities

Don't miss the "Advent"ure activity on December 12 at 7:00 PM. Have fun learning the meaning of Advent and get into the spirit of Christmas.

January's youth gathering is an Epiphany Party on Friday, January 12. There will be games, crafts and snacks. Come and join the fun.

There's word going round that a sock-hop is in the works. Keep your eyes and ears open for the date and time.



For October:

Operating Expenses:

Income	\$15,190.55
Expenses	<u>14,176.74</u>
Net	1,013.81

Building Fund

Income	3,141.30
Mortgage payment	<u>2,314.89</u>
Net	826.41

Balance remaining
on mortgage as of
10/31/08

\$40,589.14

Announcing....

The birth of Brooks Haviland Hiteshew, born November 5, 2008. Brooks' proud grandmother is Cheryl Wooden of our congregation.

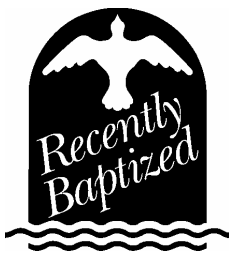
Service of the Longest Night Blue Christmas

December 17, 2008
7:00 PM

The holidays can be difficult for us all: the stresses and strains of trying to offer a time of celebration take their toll. Many people find they have trouble feeling "in the spirit" of things, whether because of the recent (or anticipated) death of a family member or friend, the end of a marriage, the loss of work or other trying change. *A Service of the Longest Night* is so named because of its

proximity to the winter solstice - the longest night of the year. But the name is also fitting because - despite the trappings of gifts, special meals, and Christmas carols - the season can be darker than "normal" times of the year for those who struggle.

Come and join us.



Joshua Daniel Groh

*Son of
Jennifer & Richard Groh
November 23, 2008*

We welcome Daniel as a preparatory member of the Linden Heights church family.

ROCK RETREAT

The Confirmation Class will be attending the Baltimore-Washington Conference Youth retreat in Ocean City the weekend of January 30, 31 and February 1, 2009. There will be inspirational speakers, musical ministry and spiritual growth. Pastor Karen will be attending ROCK with the Confirmation Class. Please keep these youth in your prayers as they grow in spirit.

From the Nursery School

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS DURING CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

During the week of December 21, the office will be open on Monday, December 22 from 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM and on Tuesday December 23, from 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM. The office will be closed from December 24 to January 6.

If you need to contact Pastor Karen, please leave a message on line 2 of the church answering machine. She checks the machine several times a day. Pastor Karen can also be reached on her cell phone, 410-812-1338 or at home, 410-821-0021.

Family First Sundays

Don't forget Sunday, December 7 is a Family First Sunday. We would greatly appreciate if everyone could bring some food item to share. You do not have to make something from scratch, a purchased item is fine. Some suggestions are fruit, veggies & dip, cheese, small sandwiches, cakes, donuts, bagels & brownies. There will be name tags as you enter the Fellowship Hall to help you meet and greet someone new. Please contact Cheryl Wooden at 410-823-1612 if you have any questions.

I would like to begin with two special thank you's. First to Mary Ann Erdman

for her generous donation to the preschool. Thank you Miss Mary Ann. The second to the Church trustees. They repaired the fence around the playground after it was vandalized. We greatly appreciate their help.

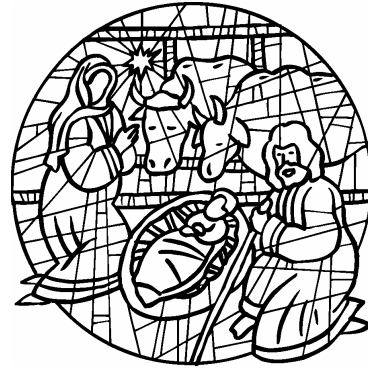
In November we learned about the first Thanksgiving, Indians, turkeys and signs of fall. We hope everyone had a Happy Thanksgiving.

December will go quickly with teachings of the meaning of Christmas. Santa Claus will be visiting us and we will have our holiday celebration. Merry Christmas!

Debbie Roberg

Hayride Fun

The Annual Beachmont Hayride was filled with laughter, song and lots of throwing hay. We started our evening in two wagons for a nice ride around the grounds, however when going up hills you do become quite friendly with your neighbor. In the middle of the ride our two wagons met and each of us pretty much emptied their wagons during a wild and wonderful hay fight. We ended the evening with roasting hotdogs and marshmallows. We sang together, listened to a short message and left feeling the closeness of a church family.



Crèche Blessing Prayer

Eternal God and Creator of the whole human family-You fill our hearts with joy during this holy season. Everything we see and hear and touch reminds us of the Christ, your gift to us. Bless our crèche as a visual reminder of your presence among us. Let it remind us always of your amazing love for us all and call us to praise and prayer. Amen.

The Staff of Linden Heights wishes every member of our church family a Very Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!

Pastor	Karen Davis
Director of Music	Gary Van Essen
Accompanist	Jennifer McDonnell
Hand Bell Director	Deidre Duda
Adm. Assistant	Deb Singer
Nursery Attendant	Renee' Wachter

