

The Linden Letter

February 2010

My brothers and sisters in Christ:

It is hard to believe that we are in February already! Where has the time gone? It's time to take down the Christmas wreath on my door and replace it with something more seasonal. Perhaps a heart for Valentine's Day?

Even though we think of Valentine's Day as a secular holiday, love is a major component of the Christian faith. We are called to love God and our neighbors as ourselves. Jesus talked about loving our enemies and praying for those who persecute us. Paul spoke of love as the greatest gift of all. If one calls oneself a Christian, one *must* practice love. Loving is a difficult thing to do, because it often means putting aside one's natural human emotions. It feels a whole lot easier for us to curse or ignore our enemies and nurture our sense of strong dislike for such people, rather than to practice love and forgiveness. Yet, Jesus does not allow us to say, "I'll love this person, but not that person." If we believe that every other human being is our neighbor, and we are told to "love our neighbors," it is *essential* that we do precisely that...love EVERYBODY!

In Luke chapter four, Jesus (who, by the way, is a young adult) reads words from Isaiah that would become his mission statement and an outline of his entire ministry

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Have you ever thought of how offensive this message is? That the good news of the kingdom of God, isn't for the healthy, it isn't for those who pretend to have it all together; it isn't for those who are all cleaned up? The message is actually for "those people." You know what I mean by *those* people, don't you? The message is for *those* people we perceive as unclean. The message is for *those* people we label as dirty. The message is for *those* people that we find it hard to love. People didn't like it back then and people don't like it now. Perhaps that is why we try to cover up all of our dirt with artificial masks of beauty: beautiful clothes, beautiful cars, beautiful church. But what we really long for is love in the form of deep, meaningful, authentic, tightly-knit relationships.

As we seek to be the church (the Kingdom of God) in this world may these words from 1 Corinthians 13:1-8, 12-13 from "The Message" guide our hearts in the ways of love...

If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don't love, I'm nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate. If I speak God's Word with power, revealing all his mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, "Jump," and it jumps, but I don't love, I'm nothing. If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I

*do, I'm bankrupt without love. Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, doesn't have a swelled head, doesn't force itself on others, isn't always "me first," doesn't fly off the handle, doesn't keep score of the sins of others, doesn't revel when others grovel, takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, puts up with anything, trusts God always, always looks for the best, never looks back, but keeps going to the end. Love never dies. Inspired speech will be over some day; praying in tongues will end; understanding will reach its limit. We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us! But for right now, until that completeness, **we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly...And the best of the three is love!***

Pastor Karen

February Highlights

Sunday, February 7		Souper Bowl of Caring Family First Sunday
Sunday, February 14		Hand Bell Choir Bake Sale
Tuesday, February 16	6:00 - 8:00 PM	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
Wednesday, February 17	7:00 PM	Ash Wednesday Service

Food Box

I would like to remind you about the food box when you come in the door. We still have a need to provide food, clothing, blankets, and personal items for the poor and homeless. If you have anything that you want to donate, you can put them in the same box. We have given items to the Cecil County homeless, Nehemiah Homeless Shelter, Bea Gaddy, Community Assistance Network, Hampden Food Pantry, Manna

House and the Hearts Place Shelter in the past.

Thanks,
Missions Committee



Bring
Canned
Goods

**Souper Bowl
of Caring**

You can make a difference! Help our neighbors in need. Our collection will

take place on Sunday, February 7. We will be collecting canned food items and accepting monetary donations. Our donations will be going to the Parkville Community Assistance Network and Manna House.

December Events

During the Advent season we had many events at Linden Heights. The Christmas concert on December 13 at Arnolia was a delightful evening with wonderful music and fellowship. Many hours of practice go into producing the concert. We are truly grateful for our Music Director, Gary Van Essen and our Hand Bell Director, Deirdre Duda for their dedication to our church. The Chancel Choir members and all of the Hand Bell Choir members who dedicate hours to make our music program outstanding, whether it's for a special concert, Christmas Eve or their anthems on Sunday morning, are a blessing to this church. Thank you for your talent and devotion to the music program.

The Missions tree was a huge success. Thank you to everyone who donated mittens, hats, socks and books to the needy. Many families in need are now a little warmer thanks to your generosity.

The Nativity Scene was a tremendous success. We had 112 cars stop by to see the characters and animals. The

music was wonderful and everyone enjoyed a cup of hot chocolate and a snack. Many thanks to Ken and Debbie Thomas for organizing the nativity scene and thanks to all the volunteers who stood out in the cold to make the evening a success.

We would also like to extend our appreciation to ROHA Farms for allowing us to use their animals at the Nativity Scene.



Merlyn Lee Bayne

Entered in our church fellowship

May 22, 1988

Entered into the church triumphant

January 24, 2010

Our sympathy is extended to Lee's family. Her smiling face on Sunday morning will truly be missed.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Please join us for our annual pancake supper on Tuesday, February 16 from 6:00 - 8:00 PM. Our menu is pancakes, sausage, fruit, orange juice and coffee. The price is \$4.00/person and \$10.00/family (maximum of 4 people).

Children 3 and under are free. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex.



All are invited to attend the Ash Wednesday

service for prayer, worship and imposition of ashes on February 17 at 7:00 PM in the sanctuary.

Family First/Coffee Hour

February 7 is our next Family First Sunday. Please join your other church family members in some snacks and coffee following each service. If you usually attend the second service, come early and meet some members from the first service.

If there is one thing United Methodists enjoy its dining together. So we have plenty to share, we are asking each family that attends to bring a food item. Cheese, crackers, veggies, cookies, bagels are great things to bring. Store bought items are fine. If you miss February 7, our next gathering is March 7.



Registration has begun for Linden Bridge.

Anyone interested in registering a child should call the

preschool at 410-668-0230. Our current students are looking forward to celebrating Valentine's Day. Both classes will have a party and exchange those classic little cards.

The three year olds will be going on their first field trip. We will go to Goucher College to see a production of "Max and Ruby." The four year olds will have an in house field trip. The puppeteer Candy and Cupcake will be here to perform a play about community helpers. The play will kick off our community helper unit.



Just a reminder - the flower chart for 2010 is on the narthex bulletin board waiting to be filled with flower requests. You can have flowers placed on the Altar to celebrate a special occasion like a birthday or anniversary, in memory of a loved one or simply for the glory of God. Put your name next to the date you want and let Debbie Singer know what dedication you would like to have in the bulletin. The cost for flowers is \$30.00 for a centerpiece and special colors can be requested.

Campbell's Labels

The Missions Committee will be collecting Campbell's soup labels and

labels from other Campbell products to be sent to the Henderson Settlement. Please save your labels and look for the box in the back of the church.

Trustees Concerns

There have been lights left on in the building, keys not put back in their proper places, windows left open and doors not locked after meetings. If you are a group leader or a committee chairperson, it is your responsibility to make sure everything is in proper order before you leave. We would also appreciate checking restrooms for running facets.

Any coats, sweaters, or miscellaneous items will be put in the back of the narthex for a short time but will be given to one of our missions or taken to Goodwill. This will also apply to any books, papers, etc. that are left in the church pews. If you have misplaced something, contact the church office at 410-668-6181 to see if it has been found.

If you drop off items like clothing or books for any of our mission projects, please label the bag or box so we know where it is to go. If you are putting canned goods in the food box by the breezeway door, this does not apply.

Last is our concern about trash being left outside the dumpster. If anyone sees people in the neighborhood leaving

their trash, please try to get the license plate number or check the bags for an address. Filling the dumpster with other people's trash is an added expense to the church.

Haiti Relief

If you want to make a contribution to the relief fund, please write UMCOR Haiti Emergency in the memo line of your check. You can also make a gift online at www.umc.org/haiti. Currently is not safe or possible for volunteers to go to Haiti. Those wishing to volunteer at a later date, should contact their jurisdictional United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) coordinator. Go to www.umvim.info.



November:

Operating Expenses:	
Income	\$22,694.19
Expenses	<u>14,314.51</u>
Net	8,379.68
Building Fund	
Income	\$6,192.45
Balance remaining on mortgage as of 11/30/09	\$8,810.05

December:

Operating Expenses:

Income	\$15,178.75
Expenses	<u>20,857.78</u>
Loss	(5,679.03)

Building Income:

Income	\$ 8,810.05
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Balance remaining
on mortgage as of
12/31/09

\$0.00

*Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Praise Ye the Lord!*

Growing As a Church

The Finance Committee would like to thank the congregation for their generous giving as we worked to pay off the mortgage. Since the burden of the mortgage is now gone, the church will be able to build the programming within the church. On the right side of the offering envelope Building Fund is currently printed. The Finance Committee is now asking you to think of that side as the Improvement Fund. The church still needs to set aside funds for major improvements to the building and grounds. On the left side of the envelope is printed Current Expenses which pays for all operating expenses, like the Sunday materials, small group materials, worship candles, choir music, BGE bills and a long list of other expenses. Our need is currently more on the Current Expenses side. The church has been struggling to

make ends meet. The Finance Committee asks that you consider shifting some of your giving from Improvement Fund to Current Expenses at this time. The Committee will be posting charts showing giving vs. need on a monthly basis. The charts will be in the back of the church so you can see our progress during the year. Thank you again for your support.

Cluster Choir Concert

The annual Cluster Choir Concert will be held on Sunday, May 2 at 4:30 PM. This year, Arnolia UMC will be hosting the concert. After the concert, Arnolia will serve a ticketed ham dinner.

Hand Bell Choir Bake Sale

Every spring the Hand Bell Choir attends a hand bell retreat in Ocean City. They will be selling baked goods on Sunday, February 14 to offset some of the cost of their retreat. Stop by their table in the breezeway and pick up some goodies to take home.

Linden Heights Office Hours:

Tuesday & Thursday	9:00 - 5:00
Wednesday	9:00 - 1:00

Church Phone	410-668-6181
Church Fax	410-668-6485
E-Mail	lindenheightsumc@verizon.net
Web	lindenheights.org

Deadline for March Linden Letter is
February 16, 2010.

