

My Linden Heights Community:

As I ready myself to write my February Pastor's Letter, I find my eyes overflowing with tears. Not only is my vision blurred but my head is a bit muddled as I try to figure out why my tear ducts are betraying me. My first thought is that I am suffering from an allergic reaction to medicine or makeup. I've made an appointment with my ophthalmologist for a professional diagnosis. But I fear that there may be other reasons as well and so I continue to ponder

Could these tears be a result of a deep spiritual cleansing? I just returned from **ROCK** and was deeply moved and blessed by the music and the speakers. But it was the witness of the youth and those chaperoning them that touched the depths of my soul. Some made the deeply personal decision to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior while others supported them on this important step in their spiritual journey. Smiles, embraces and prayers were but a few ways that our youth and youth leaders upheld one another in love. Surely this outpouring of the spirit by God and by God's faithful disciples would be enough to fill one to overflowing.

Could these be tears of fear and grief? Next month I will receive a call from my District Superintendent apprising me of my new appointment. Her words have the potential to unleash a radical life change for me and my family. Also, I am well aware that each moment that I spend with my Linden Heights family is a "last..." my "last" ROCK with these precious youth, my "last" confirmation class with these students, my "last" Christmas service, Good Friday Service, Easter Service. So, yes, these could be tears of grief trying to seep through my thin veneer of composure and feigned sense of calm.

Could these be tears brought about by the new life that is springing forth? Just as birth-pangs bring forth the joy of new life, so too does the ache of change bring forth the joy of a new adventure. I have learned that God uses every single experience from the past (the good and the bad) to help us to grow and, if we are willing, God can use our accrued wisdom to bring healing and hope to others. I have no doubt that the lessons that I have learned throughout my twenty years as a pastor will serve me well in the future. These tears could be tears of "thank you" to God for continuing to love me and teach me so that I may be a better witness to God's reign.

As I continue to seek both spiritual and medical answers to my leaky-eye dilemma, I leave you with the words of "Healing Rain" by Michael W. Smith (which Dan O'Neil sings so beautifully in worship) for they capture the hope-giving heart of our Healer.

*Healing rain is coming down. It's coming nearer to this old town.
Rich and poor, weak and strong. It's bringing mercy, it won't be long
Healing rain is coming down. It's coming closer to the lost and found.
Tears of joy, and tears of shame are washed forever in Jesus' name
Healing rain, it comes with fire. So let it fall and take us higher.
Healing rain, I'm not afraid to be washed in Heaven's rain*

May all of your tears, whether of joy or sorrow, remind you of God's soaking, healing grace.

Pastor Karen



February Highlights

Sunday, February 12		Handbell Choir Bake Sale
Wednesday, February 15	7:00 PM	Healing Service
Tuesday, February 21	5:30-7:30 PM	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner
Wednesday, February 22	7:00 PM	Ash Wednesday Service

BAKE SALE

Joyful Sound Handbell Choir Bake Sale

Every spring the Handbell Choir attends a hand bell retreat in Ocean City. They will be selling baked goods on Sunday, February 12 to offset some of the cost of their retreat. Stop by their table in the breezeway and pick up some goodies to take home.

Family First/Coffee Hour

February 5 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 5, our next gathering is March 4.



**ALTAR
FLOWERS**

Just a reminder - the flower chart for 2012 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.



My Linden Heights family:

Thank you so much for the generous Christmas gift. I am so blessed to serve you and thank God each day for each and every one of you. I hope to use a portion of the monetary offering to help with our beach house rental this summer. Thanks again for blessing me and my family.

Pastor Karen

To My Church Family,

At Christmas I received a generous gift of appreciation from the church family. I

cannot express how thankful I am for being able to work with everyone in this church and how much this gift means to me. I lost a lot of weight this year and was in need of some new clothes so you will be seeing me wearing your present.

Blessings,

Deb Singer

Dear Friends of Hospitalized Veterans:

On behalf of the patients and staff at the Loch Raven VA Community Living and Rehabilitation Center, I wish to express my appreciation for your recent contribution to VA Maryland Health Care System. Your donation will help enhance the everyday lives of the Veterans in our care.

Donations are utilized in many ways and in numerous areas to brighten the lives of our Veteran patients and assist them in their recovery. Your gift will be used to support the needs of the Veterans at the Loch Raven VA Community Living and Rehabilitation Center.

Thank you again for your generous donation and for your interest in the welfare of our Veteran patients.

Barbra A Swan, CAVS
Voluntary Service Specialist

(This was for the Christmas cards we sent to the Loch Raven VA Community Living and Rehabilitation Center.)

December Events

The Advent season was an exciting time at Linden Heights. Our Nativity Scene was a tremendous success. What an outreach into the community! Many thanks to our youth for being our "manger characters" and to Barb Yingling, Becky Steward and Rich Sheats for keeping the characters moving. The music from the Chancel Choir and the Hand Bell Choir was wonderful. This year's turnout was so much larger than last years. So many people enjoyed the Christmas story, the hot chocolate and the animals. It was a great way to start the season. Many thanks to Ken and Debbie Thomas for helping to organize the evening and thank you to everyone who made it a success.

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

This year's Christmas pageant was "outstanding". It was great fun having the congregation be a part of the pageant. I was amazed at how many "adults" decided to participate in the play. Many thanks to Ruth Snyder, Barb Yingling and Pastor Karen for our "Paper Bag Christmas".

This year we partnered with the Franciscan Center of Baltimore to provide children under 4 with warm winter clothing, hats and mittens. It was nice to see our mitten tree full and to see all the packages under the tree in the narthex. God bless everyone

who participated in this mission activity.

The Christmas Eve services were so meaningful with all of the wonderful music. Thank you to Vanessa Lawson, Dave Conrad, Deirdre Duda, Dan O'Neil and Scott Clark for the time they dedicate to this church. It is amazing to hear all the beautiful sounds that come from the voices and instruments.

The music provided by The Chancel Choir, Handbell Choir, Band of Ages and Dan O'Neil is such an asset to our church services any time of year. Thanks to everyone who gives their time and talent.



November:

Operating Expenses:

Income	\$13,609.96
Expenses	<u>12,810.86</u>
Net	799.10

Improvement Fund

Income	\$ 892.99
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December:

Operating Expenses:

Income	\$14,604.22
Expenses	<u>16,068.60</u>
Loss	(1,464.38)

Improvement Fund

Income	\$ 795.00
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The Tuesday Men's Bible Study Group and this year's

confirmation class will be serving our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on February 21 from 5:30 - 7:30 PM in the Fellowship Hall. The menu consists of all you can eat pancakes, sausage fruit, juice & coffee. The cost is \$6/person or \$20/family (max. of 4). Children 3 & under are free. There will be a sign-up sheet in the narthex. Just pay at the door.



All are invited to attend the Ash Wednesday service for prayer, worship and

imposition of ashes on February 22 at 7:00 PM in the sanctuary.

Campbell's Soup Labels

Don't forget to bring in your Campbell's Soup labels to the people at the Henderson Settlement. It's amazing what a few labels from each church can mean to Henderson. So please keep cutting and dropping them in the box. You can find the Campbell's box on the narthex table.

Church Structure

Worship Committee:

The main purpose of this committee is to advise and support the Pastor for Sunday and special worship services. Mary Ann Erdman is the chairperson for this committee this year.

Worship has many subgroups within the committee. The music directors for the traditional service, Vanessa Lawson and Dave Conrad are part of this group. Dan O'Neil attends as the lead musician in the informal service. Deirdre Duda is the representative for the Handbell Choir.

This committee is also responsible for making sure the paraments are changed for every "religious season" within the church. Stacey & Ray Poe have taken this responsibility this year. We also have a list of volunteers who purchase the communion elements and prepare them for the first Sunday of the month. For the informal service, there are volunteers who purchase the elements and prepare them for communion.

Carolyn Kramer is in charge of contacting people to read for the traditional service and being communion stewards. Sally Morris contacts parishioners of the church to be Sunday morning greeters.

Rose Ruppertsberger sets up the baptismal font, arranges the baptism candle and wiping

cloth. Sandy Simmons is our "Wedding Coordinator". She meets with the bride & groom prior to the wedding and is here during the rehearsal and wedding to make sure everything runs smoothly for both the couple and the church.

Paul Kelley is our acolyte coordinator this year. It has been his responsible to teach each youth the meaning of being an acolyte. Jim Pritchard has been the Lead Usher at Linden Heights for a long time. He arranges for other gentlemen to collect the offering during the traditional service.

Ruth Snyder represents the Sunday school and she also has the very large job of decorating the sanctuary for all holidays. She puts out the flowers for Easter and the poinsettias for Christmas. Ruth and Frank Sheckells tend to the candles.

Patti Lawrence is our at-large member on this committee.

There certainly is a lot that goes on behind the scenes of the church. The worship committee is always involved in the planning of service. The next time you see one of the people I mentioned above, you might want to say "thank you."



NEWS

FROM CONFERENCE

Webinars for church leaders: The General Board of Discipleship (GBOD) is offering several free webinars for church leaders.

Register at

www.gbod.org/committee_resources.

Included are:

• Feb. 9 at 6:30 PM CST: 10 **COMMANDMENTS FOR CHURCH WEBSITES**. A website is the new front door to your church. Patrick Steil, Webmaster for the North Texas Conference and owner of ChurchBuzz.org, will walk you through 10 Commandments that transform your website into the best outreach and communications tool that has ever been possible.

• Feb. 23 at 6:30 PM CST: **HEALTHY CHURCH LEADERS - KEY FACTORS**. SPRC has a key role for health of body, mind and soul for your pastor and leaders. GBPHB's **Center for Health shares key factors for a healthy ministry environment**.

Training for new church leaders is also available. One-hour recorded modules are available for the Church Council, Trustees, Nominating Committees, Finance leaders, and S/PPRC. Individuals can watch at home or church groups can view the modules when

they meet. Encourage the pastors and laity in congregations to learn their jobs with these modules posted at

www.gbod.org/committee_resources.

LENTEN SYMBOLS

Many churches save the palm leaves from Palm Sunday services and burn them the following year to create ashes for Ash Wednesday services.



Linden Heights Office Hours:

Tuesday & Thursday 9:00 - 5:00

Wednesday 10:00 - 2:00

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Deadline for March Linden Letter is
February 21, 2012.