



## Pastor's Letter

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I worked with the food pantry today. Actually, that's not entirely true. I helped in the food pantry because our food ministry coordinator Morgan is out of town this week. Our Food Ministry currently serves around 50 households. People pick up their food Monday and Wednesday afternoons. But everyone can't get boxes at once, so while folks wait, we hang out in the fellowship hall. We share coffee or hot tea and visit. Today a massage therapist came and did hand massages. It was nice, relaxing. But today as I chatted with one of the dear neighbors of the church, our thoughts and conversation went to the suffering of our sisters and brothers in Haiti.

We, like so many, can't even begin to absorb the weight of the sadness and loss. And suddenly, the woman I was visiting with asked me if our congregation was responding to the crisis. "Absolutely!" We already began collecting money for Lutheran World Relief and Disaster Response last Sunday. As the woman was called to go next door to the Center for Graceful Living to pick up her food, she reached into her bag and gave me some money. "Please use this to help those suffering in Haiti." Her gift surprised me. I was humbled and touched by her graciousness. This woman who is facing challenges in feeding herself and her children, choose to give generously to help other sisters and brothers in pain.

We know God is with us always. We who follow Jesus trust that God is in the very center of things, bringing help and hope and healing; bringing guidance and care to our lives and world...But sometimes... sometimes we get caught off guard. The extravagant grace and love and forgiveness of God gets reflected in a holy moment we experience. And it almost takes our breath away, to be touched so profoundly. Oh, that we all live with such extravagant generosity!

*Pastor Gary*

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

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### 2010 Council Leadership Team in Place

As we begin 2010, we are grateful for those who will be serving as officers of the congregation:

Sheldon Cooper — Chair  
Cheryl Williams — Vice-Chair  
Joe Stocks — Treasurer  
Pete Stokes — Secretary  
Brian Ault — Financial Secretary

## Information Sharing and Gathering Area to be Created

One of the challenges of our building is there is very little space in the narthex for people to linger before and after worship for conversation. In addition, a gathering area can allow visitors to gain information about Amazing Grace and ministries of which we're a part.

After discussion at the last Council meeting, the decision was made to create welcome center in the Southeast corner of the sanctuary. While the Council voiced a desire to be mindful of the worship space and finding ways to show respect and reverence, there is also recognition that hospitality and the need for a designated welcome space is desired.

Current plans to create this welcome space include the relocation of the last pew to the balcony (for storage in case we wish to place it in the sanctuary again), the addition of an area rug to define the space, and a small narrow table where newsletters and visitor welcome packets as well as sign-up sheets could be placed. If you have other ideas or questions bring them to Pastor Gary or a Council member.

## Wednesday Lenten Services with Baltimore City Churches

As been our practice over the past few years, we have planned to gather together with 4 other churches for soup supper and worship on the five Wednesdays of Lent. We will be coming together with Faith, St. Johns-Pimlico, Jerusalem and All Saints Lutheran Churches. We gather at 6 PM for a light soup supper and fellowship. At 7 we come together for worship—focusing this year on our baptismal life together. The date that Amazing Grace will host is on March 10th. If you need a ride, please talk with Pr. Gary or Sr. Kati.

## Wednesday Evening

### Women's Bible Study

Has moved from Tuesdays to Wednesdays at 5:30 pm. Please consider coming—we welcome you! Speak to Sr. Kati if you have any questions.

## Soda Lids

If you have soda lids, please save them and bring to church and drop in the soda lid collection bin. Your donation will help increase kidney dialysis time for individuals in need. See Manard Price for details.

## Food Ministry Continues to Expand

### *Two hot meals to be served in February as well as a Produce Drop planned*

The food pantry is now up and running serving nearly 50 families in our community. Intake interviews take place Monday – Thursday from 10-2. Food distribution days are Monday and Wednesday from 3- 4:30 (winter hours).

On Monday, January 18<sup>th</sup> (Martin Lutheran King Day), Amazing Grace partnered with Bea Gaddy to provide lunch for the neighborhood. On Monday, February 15<sup>th</sup> (Presidents day) we will once again partner to provide another hot meal to the community. In addition, on February 20<sup>th</sup> (Saturday), a meal will be provided by Trinity Lutheran from Mount Joy, PA.

On Tuesday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, we will partner once again with the Maryland Food Bank to receive a produce drop. Food will be distributed from 3 to 5 pm, with volunteers needed at 1 o'clock to help unload the truck. Talk to Morgan Blizzard, food ministry coordinator, for more information by phone at the church office during the week, or by e-mail at AmazingGraceFood@gmail.com.

## Lent Begins on February 17



On Wednesday, February 17, the season of Lent begins. Known as Ash Wednesday, it is the Wednesday of the seventh week before Easter and the first day of Lent. The day is named for the practice of imposing ashes, a practice which many Lutheran congregations have found to be a very meaningful part of the Ash Wednesday liturgy. Using ashes as a sign of repentance is an ancient practice, often mentioned in the Bible (e.g., Jonah 3:5-9; Job 42:6; Jeremiah 6:26; Matthew 11:21). The early Christians adopted the use of ashes from Jewish practice as an external mark of penitence.

This year, we will have the two opportunities to worship together. There will be a noon service on Ash Wednesday as well as a service at 7 PM. Both will be services where those worshipping will receive ashes as well as Holy Communion. Lent is a time which we are invited to remember the ways in which our baptism has called us into our life of discipleship following Jesus. Come worship the Lord—come pray with your sisters and brothers—come rest awhile in the blessings of our God.

## **SAD?**

### **Are You Feeling SAD?**

If you notice periods of depression that seem to accompany seasonal changes during the year, you may suffer from seasonal affective disorder or **SAD**. This condition is characterized by recurrent episodes of depression – usually in late fall and winter – alternating with periods of normal or high mood the rest of the year.

Most people with SAD are women whose illness typically begins in their twenties, although men also report SAD of similar severity and have increasingly sought treatment.

### **What does SAD look like?**

Symptoms of winter SAD usually begin in October or November and get better in March or April. Some people begin to slump as early as August, while others remain well until January. Regardless of the time of onset, most patients don't feel fully back to normal until early May. Depressions are usually mild to moderate, but they can be severe.

The usual characteristics of recurrent winter depression include oversleeping, daytime fatigue, carbohydrate craving and weight gain, although not everyone who has SAD will show these symptoms. A person with SAD can also feel decreased sexual interest, lethargy, hopelessness, suicidal thoughts, lack of interest in normal activities, and social withdrawal.

### **What should I do if I think I have SAD?**

If your symptoms are mild – that is, if they don't interfere too much with your daily living, you may want to try light therapy which your doctor can tell you about. Or you may also want to try adjusting the light in your surroundings with bright lamps and scheduling more time outdoors in winter.

If your depressive symptoms are severe enough to significantly affect your daily living, consult a mental health professional qualified to treat SAD. He or she can help you find the most appropriate treatment for you. You may also talk with Sr. Kati or Pr. Gary if you are worried that you might be experiencing any type of depression.

# Wade in the Water

**You**  
**are invited to the**  
**Baltimore City Lenten Services**  
**Wednesdays**

Soup Supper 6PM & Worship 7 PM

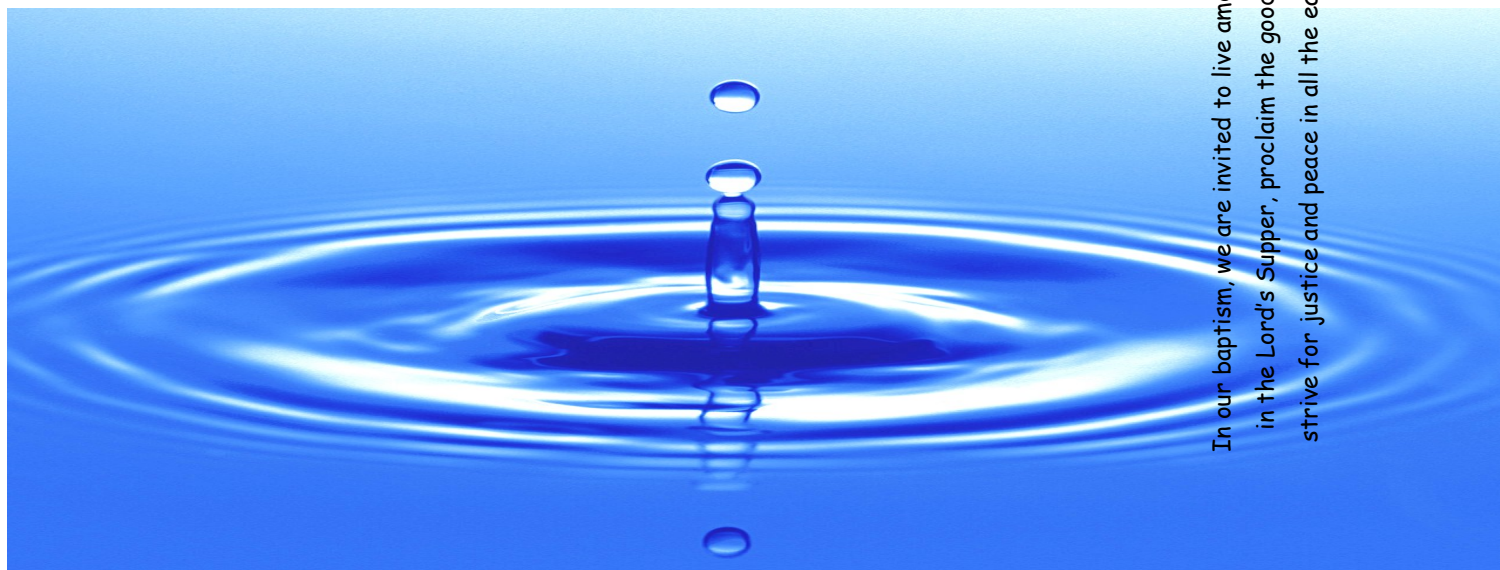
**February 24th—St. John's Lutheran Church-Pimlico,**

**March 3rd—Jerusalem Lutheran Church,**

**March 10th—Amazing Grace Lutheran Church,**

**March 17th— All Saints Lutheran Church, March 24-Faith Lutheran Church.**

*In our baptism, we are invited to live among God's faithful people, hear the Word of God and share in the Lord's Supper, proclaim the good news, serve all people following the example of Jesus & strive for justice and peace in all the earth. Lent calls us to reflect together how we live this to-*



# FEBRUARY 2010

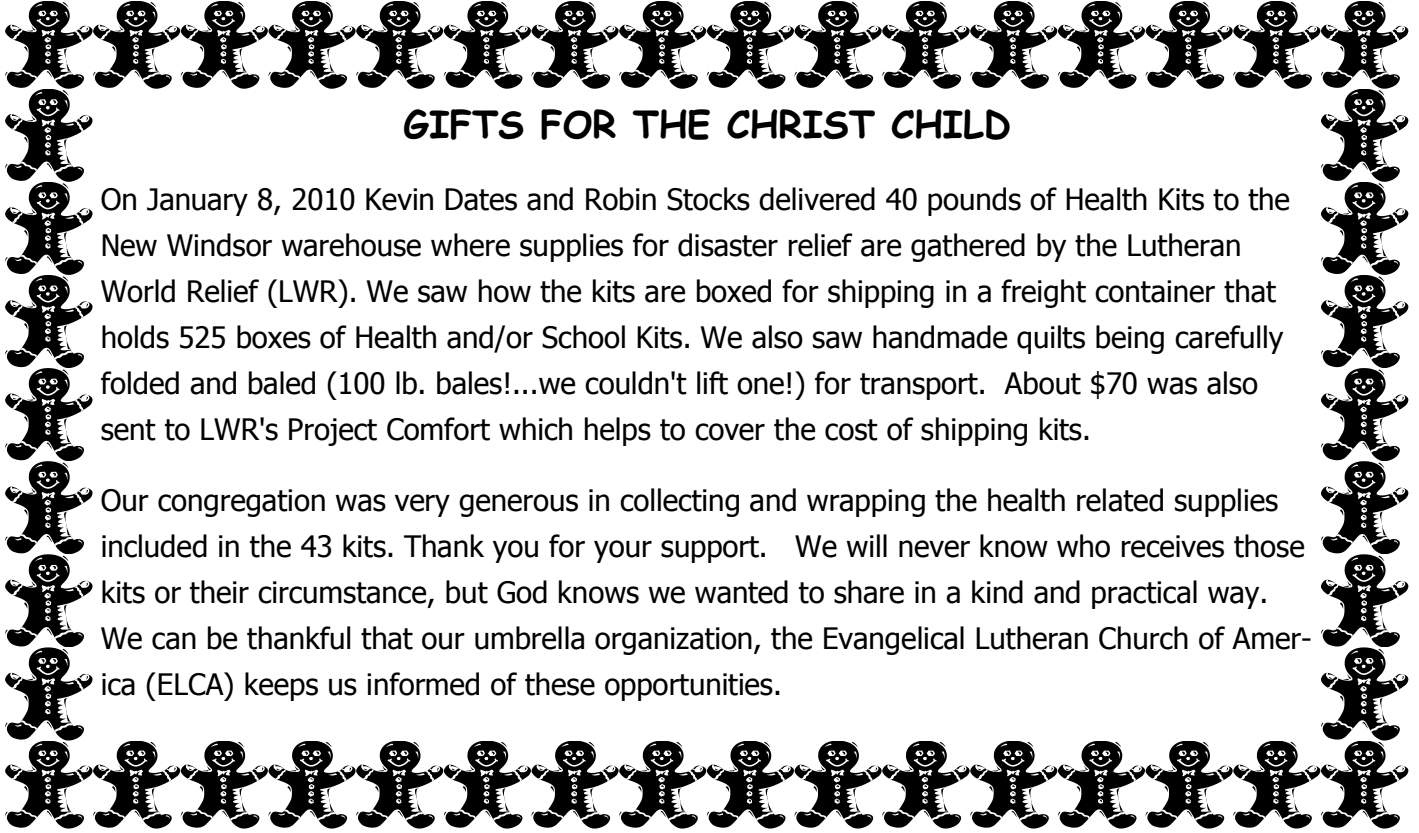


| SUN   | MON                                    | TUES                            | WED  | THU | FRI | SAT   |
|---|--|---------------------------------|--|-----|-----|---|
|   | 1                                      | 2                               | 3<br>Women's Bible Study 5 p.m.  | 4   | 5   | 6<br>Perfect Praise 10:30 a.m.<br><br>Shepherds 10:30 a.m.<br><br>AG Choir 12:30 p.m. |
| 7<br>Worship 10:30 a.m.   | 8<br>Food Pantry 3–5 p.m.              | 9                               | 10<br>Women's Bible Study 5 p.m.<br>Food Pantry 3–5 p.m.<br>CAP—Perfect Praise                     | 11  | 12  | 13<br>Perfect Praise 10:30 a.m.<br><br>AG Choir 12:30 p.m.                            |
| 14<br>Worship 10:30 a.m.  | 15<br>Bea Gaddy Soup Kitchen 12–2 p.m. | 16<br>Produce Giveaway 3–5 p.m. | 17<br>Ash Wednesday Service 12 noon & 7 p.m.<br>Women's Bible Study 5 p.m.<br>Food Pantry 3–5 p.m. | 18  | 19  | 20<br>Perfect Praise 10:30 a.m.<br>Hot lunch 12–2 p.m. FH<br>AG Choir 12:30 p.m.      |
| 21<br>Worship 10:30 a.m.  | 22<br>Food Pantry 3–5 p.m.             | 23                              | 24<br>Women's Bible Study 5 p.m.<br><br>Food Pantry 3–5 p.m.                                       | 25  | 26  | 27<br>Perfect Praise 10:30 a.m.<br><br>AG Choir 12:30 p.m.                            |
| 28<br>Worship 10:30 a.m.<br><br>Meal after Worship<br><br>Healing Worship meet @ church 1:45 p.m. |  |                                 |  |     |     |   |



# MARCH 2010

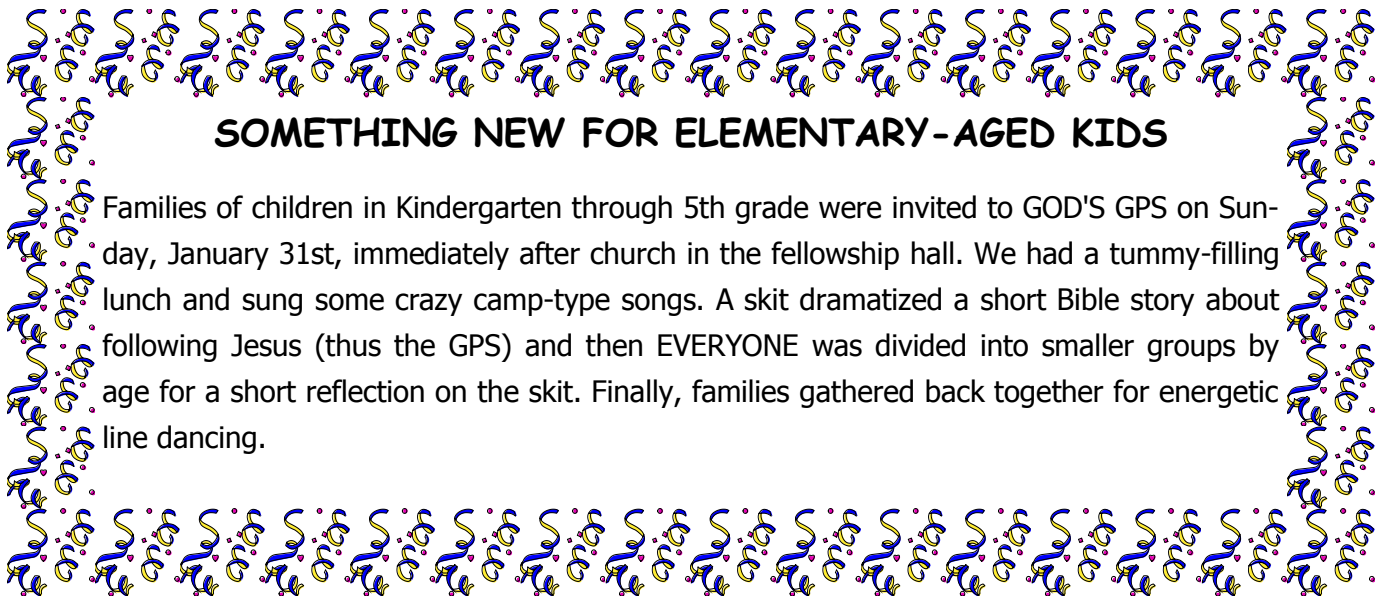
| SUN   | MON   | TUES | WED  | THU | FRI | SAT  |
|---|---|------|--|-----|-----|--|
|   | 1   | 2    | 3  | 4   | 5   | 6<br>Perfect Praise<br>10:30 a.m.<br>Shepherds<br>10:30 a.m.<br>AG Choir<br>12:30 p.m. |
| 7<br>Worship<br>10:30 a.m.  | 8<br>Food Pantry<br>3–5 p.m.  | 9    | 10<br>Women's Bible<br>Study 5 p.m.<br><br>Food Pantry<br>3–5 p.m. | 11  | 12  | 13<br>Perfect Praise<br>10:30 a.m.<br>AG Choir<br>12:30 p.m.                           |
| 14<br>Worship<br>10:30 a.m.   | 15<br>Food Pantry<br>3–5 p.m.<br><br>Amazing<br>Grandmothers<br>5:45 p.m. | 16   | 17<br>Women's Bible<br>Study 5 p.m.<br><br>Food Pantry<br>3–5 p.m. | 18  | 19  | 20<br>Perfect Praise<br>10:30 a.m.<br><br>AG Choir<br>12:30 p.m.                       |
| 21<br>Worship<br>10:30 a.m.   | 22<br>Food Pantry<br>3–5 p.m.   | 23   | 24<br>Women's Bible<br>Study 5 p.m.<br><br>Food Pantry<br>3–5 p.m. | 25  | 26  | 27<br>Perfect Praise<br>10:30 a.m.<br><br>AG Choir<br>12:30 p.m.                       |
| 28<br>Palm Sunday<br>Worship<br>10:30 a.m.<br><br>Meal after<br>worship<br><br>Healing worship<br>2:30 p.m. | 29<br>Food Pantry<br>3–5 p.m.<br><br>Amazing<br>Grandmothers<br>5:45 p.m. | 30   | 31<br>Food Pantry<br>3–5 p.m.                                      |     |     |  |



## GIFTS FOR THE CHRIST CHILD

On January 8, 2010 Kevin Dates and Robin Stocks delivered 40 pounds of Health Kits to the New Windsor warehouse where supplies for disaster relief are gathered by the Lutheran World Relief (LWR). We saw how the kits are boxed for shipping in a freight container that holds 525 boxes of Health and/or School Kits. We also saw handmade quilts being carefully folded and baled (100 lb. bales!...we couldn't lift one!) for transport. About \$70 was also sent to LWR's Project Comfort which helps to cover the cost of shipping kits.

Our congregation was very generous in collecting and wrapping the health related supplies included in the 43 kits. Thank you for your support. We will never know who receives those kits or their circumstance, but God knows we wanted to share in a kind and practical way. We can be thankful that our umbrella organization, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) keeps us informed of these opportunities.



## SOMETHING NEW FOR ELEMENTARY-AGED KIDS

Families of children in Kindergarten through 5th grade were invited to GOD'S GPS on Sunday, January 31st, immediately after church in the fellowship hall. We had a tummy-filling lunch and sung some crazy camp-type songs. A skit dramatized a short Bible story about following Jesus (thus the GPS) and then EVERYONE was divided into smaller groups by age for a short reflection on the skit. Finally, families gathered back together for energetic line dancing.

## What are you giving up for Lent?

**By** Regina Brett, The Plain Dealer Blog

The starter pistol for Lent fires in just a few weeks. What are you giving up? Back in Catholic school, we had to answer that question by Ash Wednesday, the official kickoff to 40 days of sacrifice, penance and fish fry Fridays. What to pick? You had to choose something tough enough to be meaningful but easy enough to endure. After all, Jesus withstood temptation while fasting in the desert for 40 days, so how hard could it be to give up soda pop, chewing gum or "Gilligan's Island"? If you haven't picked your poison, here are a few things to give up for Lent -- and maybe for good:

- Me, me, me. Not as in vocal warm-ups, but as in I, I, I am center of the universe.
- Being a Type-A. Using your horn. Telling jokes you wouldn't tell in front of your grandmother.
- Smoking cigars. They stink, you stink, then we stink.
- Your fear of failure. God loves you as is, flaws and all. Accept it and live happily ever after.
- The need to be right. Caring what other people think of you. Believing everything you think.
- Searching the Web for hours instead of spending a half hour talking to the widow next door or throwing a football with the neighbor kids.
- Blaming your parents, your boss, your ex. Chances are they did the best they could with what they had.
- Grabbing the best parking spot. Let someone else have it.
- Give up MySpace, Facebook or Twitter.
- Nagging your spouse about things that wouldn't matter if the biopsy came back positive.
- The quest for perfection. Make completion your goal. You'll get more accomplished.
- Reading the gossip papers.
- Buying one more toy you don't need.
- Whining about the good old days. Instead, make today better for those who will outlive you.
- Instead of giving up something, you could start doing something for Lent:
- Try out these nine new words: I am sorry. You were right. I love you.
- Use your blinker.
- Be kind to the Jehovah's Witnesses.
- Listen more than you talk. Pause before you speak. Restraint of tongue, pen and e-mail goes a long way.
- Attend a church where everyone doesn't look like you.
- Change the soundtrack to your life. Cut the depressing music. Cue the Broadway musicals.
- Look a homeless person in the eye and pretend he is your brother. Oh, wait. He is.
- Practice mercy instead of demanding justice. Go to confession.
- Tell the truth. Clean up after yourself. Be early. Tip big.
- Believe there is enough to go around. Change the toilet paper roll. Fill the ice cube tray.
- Donate one hour's pay to the Red Cross, the City Mission or the nearest soup kitchen.
- Read Psalms 16, 30, 43, 59 or 108.
- Wake up 15 minutes early to sit with God. Just the two of you. Best time you ever spent with anyone, guaranteed.
- Be still and know that you aren't God. What a relief!

**AMAZING GRACE EV.  
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Submit newsletter information to the  
e-mail address by March 15, 2010

**Circle of Prayer**



Dree Hagan & family, Nick Molly & Tara Bertoldi (children of Katie & Dave Bertoldi), Kathy & Frank Brown & family, Michael Stocks, Mary Fitze, Jerry Waters, Betty Puckett, Elaine Janssen, Rudy Janssen, Evelyn Kintop, Tim Wright, Charles Young, Hattie Gross, and Amy Appleton. We also pray for our mission as a congregation.

**Looking for Summer Servant**

**Projects?**

Several weeks this summer, high school youth groups from North Carolina will be traveling to East Baltimore to work with the community and assist Amazing Grace in our outreach and ministry.

Pastor Gary is currently seeking work projects which could be carried out. Appropriate projects might include painting of a room, cleaning out a yard space or alley, assisting in doing windows. If you have any possible servant projects, or know a neighbor who might benefit, please talk to Pastor Gary.

**Condolence**

We express our Christian sympathy to Jill Shuman in the death of her mother. May God's comfort and peace surround her and her family, bringing hope and resurrection.

**Healing Worship  
Service**



**Every 4th Sunday**

**Meet 1:45 p.m. to walk  
together to a  
Transitional House**

During our service, we pray, sing, give testimony, hear God's word and are anointed with oil. In the healing worship service, we come together to celebrate God's healing power as we live in God's amazing grace one day at a time and for some of us, one moment at a time. We are encouraged to ...

- ✓ Participate in the bible readings
- ✓ Share in the music
- ✓ Listen to the message
- ✓ Give our testimonies
- ✓ Join in the prayers
- ✓ Forgive ourselves
- ✓ Reflect in silence

**Next worship dates are  
February 28th and March 28th**