

The Lion of St. Mark's

February 2006

The Work of Stephen Ministry Continues . . .

tephen Ministry Sunday will be marked on February 19. Even though we call attention to their work on this one day of the year, the work continues year-round. It will always remain just a bit mysterious, since there is a necessary level of confidentiality about who is a carereceiver at any particular time.



On February 19, the Stephen Ministers will be wearing identifying tags so that you can recognize who they are. Ask questions! Any of them will be delighted to speak about the kinds of things they do, without revealing the names of their care receivers.

There are many kinds of reasons for which a person might request a Stephen Minister. Often it is a crisis such as a bereavement or serious illness, but sometimes it may be that a person has God-sized questions that need to be explored with an attentive listener. Here is a sampling:

- ^ Why am I alive?
- ^ How can I face the future with hope instead of dread?
- ^ What if I fail?
- ^ Why is there evil in my life?
- ^ What am I going to do with my life?
- ^ Why doesn't "success" bring satisfaction?
- ^ Why do I fight with people whom I love?

- ^ Why do I have to die?
- ^ Why do I do things I later regret?

Whether the question is large or small, if it is on your mind it is significant that it be explored. Contact Jane Larson at 323-2845 or Pastor Elkin at 323-4619 and together we can discern whether contact with a Stephen Minister might be helpful in your situation. It is quiet, confidential, and potentially very helpful! Don't hesitate; call today.

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COUNCIL UPDATE

The Congregation Council met on January 16, 2006 in the Crossways Room.

- 1. Continued the review of the *Rule* of the Society of the Holy Trinity.
- 2. Received the regular reports of the pastor, officers, and committees.
- 3. Noted Carl Burkhart's resignation from membership.
- 4. Granted Letter of Transfer for Mary Alice Hartsock to St. Andrew's, Muncy.
- 5. Granted Letter of Transfer for Jean Nolan to Messiah, S. W.
- 6. Approved a party in Fellowship Hall on February 4.
- 7. Elected the Nominating Committee for the year: Brenda Bittner, chair; Jim Buckman, Wanda Fortin, Bev Hieber, Frank Doebler.
- 8. Noted 21 different activities in the area of Christian Education—Youth ministry over the past two months.
- 9. Chose representatives of the Council to attend the mid-size congregation reporting event at the synod office on January 29.
- 10. Planned to attend the gathering of congregation councils from the conference to be held at Messiah Church on February 16th.
- 11. Set the next regular meeting for February 20 at 6:30 P.M.



Attached to this month's *Lion*, you will find an envelope marked "Heat Help." Please use it to make your donation to offset our heating bill this winter. We have not used more this year, but the cost has increased dramatically (last year, the cost was \$.63 per CCF; this year, the cost is \$1.15 per CCF).

Income from "Heat Help" contributions to date:

October—December \$1,820

January 1st—January 15th \$698

We thank you for your continued support.

On Wednesday, February 15th, the monthly meeting of Lunch 'N' Fellowship will be held in Fellowship Hall at 12:00 noon sharp. Featured on the menu will be smashed potatoes and the (in)famous Dick Lakey original heart-shaped meatloaf in honor of Valentine's Day. So bring your sweetie and join us for an hour of fellowship and good food. Bring a dish to share.



FROM THE PARISH REGISTER



- The memorial service for Ruth Lunger was celebrated on January 15.
- Ö By action of Church Council on January 16, membership for Mary Alice Hartsock was transferred to St. Andrew Lutheran Church, Muncy.
- Ö By action of Church Council on January 16, membership for Jean Nolan was transferred to Messiah Lutheran Church, South Williamsport.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY NEWS

Women of St. Mark's Clothing Sale

Saturday, April 29, 2006

The Women of Saint Mark's need your family's no-longer-wanted clothing for our spring clothing sale. We are accepting good, clean clothing from all seasons and in all sizes from infant to adult. We are also accepting shoes, suits, coats and clothing accessories. Your donations may be placed in the Bazaar Room.

This event qualifies for matching funds from Thrivent. Additionally, any clothing not sold the day of the sale will be sorted and distributed to Lutheran World Relief, Needlework Guild of America, American Rescue Workers, and other local charities that express a need for clothing when contacted.

Please take a few minutes and help us reach out to those in need locally and globally.

Please contact Becky Miller Pryor, Shirley Hill, or Louise Kneedler with suggestions, questions, or to volunteer for this event.



SUNDAY SCHOOL LENTEN STUDY

In 1529 MARTIN LUTHER, a pastor in the German town of Wittenberg and teacher at the university there, published his explanations to the chief parts of the Christian faith. Within a very short time this handbook became known as **The Small** Catechism of Martin Luther. He wrote the Small Catechism for the home, so that parents could explain to their children in simple terms the basic aspects of the Christian faith.

Beginning the first Sunday in Lent, March 5th, in the Middle Lounge Adult Sunday School Class, a study of the Small Catechism will begin. All adults are invited to attend. We will study Luther's answers to the question, "What does this mean?" as we look at The Ten Commandments, The Apostles' Creed, The Lord's Prayer, Baptism, Confession and Holy Communion. Why not join us?

Listen! God is Calling!

The Shepherd of the Streets sees the distress many citizens of our community are experiencing due to unemployment, underemployment, homelessness, or illness without insurance. We can answer God's call to serve these individuals by donating hygiene items to this ministry.

Local Dollar Stores offer wonderful bargains. During February please continue to fill the tubs in the Narthex with shampoo, conditioner, hand lotion, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shaving supplies, feminine hygiene products, baby lotion, baby powder, Kleenex, toilet tissue, towels, washcloths, calendars, and inexpensive day planners. All hygiene items should be of regular size.

YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

Faith Life Weekly, a take-home resource, is available in the Narthex every Sunday. This resource offers an at-home plan for nurturing faith and faith practices based on Sunday's worship service. Also, Kid's Celebrate is available for youth to use during the worship service or to take home to add to family devotional time throughout the week. Stop and pick up a copy!



Children's Church will be held on Sunday, February 12, 2005, at 10:30 a.m. in the Chapel. All are welcome to attend with their children or grandchildren.

THANK YOU to everyone who contributed on the trees in Fellowship Hall!! With the coming of the New Year, The Kids' Clothes Closet received 4 scarves, 52 hats, 64 pairs of gloves and 3 pairs of socks. This clothing will help to keep needy children within the community warm this season. The Williamsport Police Department will receive 77 Teddy bears to distribute for the comfort of children during traumatic times. Let's say a prayer that this donation far exceeds their need this year. A very special thank you to all!

On Sunday February 5th, St. Mark's will be giving out the "All the Languages of the Good News" milestone to those children in kindergarten here at St. Mark's. Makensi Doebler, Benjamin Haussmann, Alex Lehman, James Newcomer, Dawson Owen, Cody Shimp, Kameera Smith and Stefan Weber will be the recipients of the milestone. This milestone is a reminder that the St. Mark's congregation is a huge part of the Passing the Faith ministry. The bags may be used as a tool for nurturing faith in the home. Please acknowledge these children and their families and wish them well on this day!

It's time to "soup" up for **Souper Bowl Sunday!** February 5th is the last day
congregations across the globe to collect
money to feed the hungry in their
neighborhoods. Be a part of this ministry by
bringing your dollar or can of soup to place in
the designated container for this worthy
cause! All money collected on this day will be
given to the food pantry of our choice,
locally!



Bowling anyone? We are looking forward to having a Youth Bowling Party at Faxon Bowling Lanes in March, official date to be chosen. Watch your weekly bulletin for more

details! Call us <u>now</u> if you are interested in this event!

Look for news about this year's Vacation Bible School!! Sharon and Bernadette are in the process of planning a very special time for all!

Camp Mount Luther

Booklets for the programs this year are available in the staff hallway, along with a bulletin board of upcoming events!

Volunteer needed! A volunteer to be a Mount Luther camperson is sorely needed. This person serves as a liaison between our congregation and Camp Mount Luther. The deadline for registering our camperson is February 12. Having a camperson entitles every camper from St. Mark's to a ten dollar discount from their fees and \$5 in campbucks. Please stop by the staff hallway to check out all that Camp Mount Luther has to offer!!

JOHN BOWER SUNDAY SCHOOL BASKETBALL LEAGUE FEBRUARY SCHEDULE

BEGINNER PEE-WEES

COMPETITORS	LOCATION	TIME	DATE	
Mtsvl. Presbyterian vs. St. Mark's	Arena Center	12:30 pm	Feb. 4	
Our Lady of Lourdes vs. St. Mark's	Arena Center	3:30 pm	Feb. 11	
St. Lawrence - A vs. St. Mark's	upstairs South	11:00 am	Feb. 18	
PEE-WEES				
COMPETITORS	LOCATION	TIME	DATE	
Annunciation vs. St. Mark's	upstairs North	1:00 pm	Feb. 4	
St. Mark's vs. Antioch Baptist	Arena West	3:30 pm	Feb. 18	



The American Red Cross bloodmobile will be visiting the following locations during the month of February:

Woodward Township Fire Dept. – Feb. 7th 12 to 6 p.m. Williamsport Hospital Medical Hall – Feb. 13th 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Trinity Episcopal Church – Feb. 17th 12 to 6 p.m. Newberry St. Johns U.M.Church – Feb. 20th 12 to 6 p.m. Montoursville Social Hall -Feb. 23th 12 to 6 p.m.



www.kolbweb. com/stmarks

COMING IN MARCH From the Christian Education Dept. THE LETTER OF PHILIPPIANS

Come and join us for a joyful Bible study. You can participate any way you feel comfortable. You can both listen and take notes or help read the 4 chapters from this book. The letter to the Philippians is Paul's joy letter: "Joy in suffering," "Joy in serving," "Joy in believing," "Joy in giving." Our prayer is that we share in Paul's aspiration and rededicate ourselves to finding joy in knowing Jesus Christ.

March 5th Start date: Time: 9:15—10:10 a.m.

Classroom behind the library Location: **Duration:** March 5th—April 2nd

We hope you prayerfully consider attending

this joyful bible study. May the Holy Spirit continue to lead us all to the joy in knowing our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY NEWS

Bereavement Ministry, a hope-filled work

When there is a death, the family and neighbors will often rally around and help with the immediate crisis. There are so many decisions to be made is rapid succession. The relatives come from near and far for the service; friends call or send cards. But after a few days or several weeks, all of these nice things come to an end. But a spouse or other close relative cannot simply pick up where they left off. Things will never be the same for them because a significant relationship has been disrupted.



The pastor, friends, and congregation members do not mean to be unkind or insensitive, but they get busy with other activities. We recognize that we have an opportunity to do

more than we have in the past, and to do it in a consistent and regular way. After several visits from Deb Best, program coordinator for Congregational Health Ministries of Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries (the same person who writes the "Health, Healing, and Wholeness" column for this newsletter each month), a basic plan is being developed for us to use at St. Mark's.

The bereavement ministry-plan calls for a series of contacts from the pastor and from an appointed bereavement companion over the span of a year. Some portions of the plan will be in print, some will involve telephone contacts, and still others will be personal visits. Since they have the training and listening skills, our Stephen Ministers have agreed to accept additional responsibilities and help to develop the plan and serve as the first companions. After testing and development, we'll we looking for additional persons to train to be bereavement companions. Your questions about this new approach and the role that you can play in it can be directed to Jane Larson or Pastor Elkin.

Yes, we have a website.



Actually, we have had a website at **www.kolbweb.com/ stmarks** for some

years with the continuing assistance of Kathy Kolb of Kolb Networks, and in recent months it has become tremendously updated and expanded to include both current events and historic materials. Under the editorship of Mr. Gary Weber, newsletters, photos of activities, and other pieces of current information are now available to the viewer at any time of day, as well as articles about all of the persons who have served as pastor, the history of the congregation, and other fascinating things about St. Mark's and the surrounding community. Mr. Weber reports that the next to be developed will be the full description of the current ministry areas and activities that are underway in the congregation. Take a moment to find the website, and the moment will likely stretch into an intriguing span of time as you explore the people, life, and faith of past and current St. Mark's.



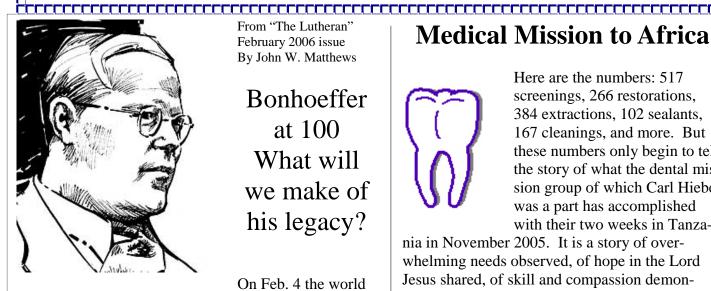
The 24th Ecumenical Pre-Lenten Celebration

will be held this year on Sunday, February 26th at 7:30 p.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church, 844 West Fourth Street, Williamsport.

The Rev. Richard J. Loch will speak on the theme "Blessed are the Peacemakers".

Fr. Loch is familiar to many in our community from his time serving as Assistant Pastor at Church of Annunciation and then as Principal at Bishop Neumann. Please plan to join us in this ecumenical celebration.

Christian Community News



From "The Lutheran" February 2006 issue By John W. Matthews

Bonhoeffer at 100 What will we make of his legacy?

On Feb. 4 the world

will commemorate the 100th anniversary of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's birth. The German pastor and theologian is remembered foremost as a martyr who was hanged in the early hours of April 9, 1945, at the Flossenburg Concentration Camp for his part in the plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler. Bonhoeffer has evoked the highest respect humans can engender for offering their life for others but also the harshest criticism one can reap for attempting to end the life of another.

For many Bonhoeffer has a well-respected place on the 20th century's short list of influential theologians. For others he deserves the label of heretic whose radical writings ought to be buried with his ashes at Flossenburg. Such an interesting life, such a controversial witness: What are we to make of this man? What will we in the 21st century make of his legacy?

In November, PBS began airing *Theologians* Under Hitler, a program based on the research and book of the same name by Robert Ericksen, an associate professor of history at Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Wash. A study guide for Theologians Under Hitler can be purchased for \$8.50 at www.vitalvisuals.com.

Our local PBS television station, WVIA, channel 44, will broadcast a documentary on Bonhoeffer's life on Monday evening, February 6th at from 10:00 to 11:00 p.m.

Medical Mission to Africa



Here are the numbers: 517 screenings, 266 restorations, 384 extractions, 102 sealants, 167 cleanings, and more. But these numbers only begin to tell the story of what the dental mission group of which Carl Hieber was a part has accomplished with their two weeks in Tanza-

nia in November 2005. It is a story of overwhelming needs observed, of hope in the Lord Jesus shared, of skill and compassion demonstrated, and dedication and perseverance unfolded. It is a story of the difference that can be made by a handful of people who are determined to accept the risks and conquer the miles and the roadblocks.

Carl Hieber was in a 11-member group that flew from Washington DC on Nov. 9 through London to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. They set up dental clinics and shared the love of God in word and deed at several different sites. Carl assisted with lots of non-medical tasks, and yes, he took photos. Carl will be sharing a presentation on the trip and its work on Sunday morning February 12 at 9:10 A.M. in the Crossways room. Seats are first-come, first-served basis. If there are more persons than the room can accommodate, Carl will consider offering a second opportunity at a future time.

Tanzania is a country on the southeastern side of Africa, about twice the size of California. It has a tropic climate along the Indian Ocean coast and more temperate in the highlands. Its people are evenly divided among Christian, Muslim, and indigenous beliefs. Tanzania has the most diverse population of the African nations, with dozens of tribal groups and languages. Swahili and English are the languages that people have in common. There are many medical challenges in the nation: for example, the age-expectancy is only 45 years; the risk of food borne or water

SPECIAL DATES ~ BIRTHDAYS



2/1	Daniel Boone	2/14	Robert Curry
	Melissa Winters	2/15	Eric Hieber
2/2	Micah Alt	2/15	Annette Peluso
2/3	Kelly Foust	2/16	Scott Kimble
	Lucille Markel	2/17	Jarrett Eyer
2/4	Lawrence Bair		Betty Stroup
	Ethel Chambers		Rick Robertson
	Susan Curry	2/18	Danielle Bardo
2/8	April Biblehimer	2/19	Geraldine Martin
	Matthew Heaps	2/20	Tyler Stugart
	Paul Zimmerer	2/21	Donna Elkin
2/9	Robert Lamade		Evelyn Ward
2/10	Gloria Greevy		Brandon Pelleschi
	Charlene Wright	2/22	Seth Greninger
2/12	Betty Diehl	2/24	Kenneth Caster
	Erick Fortin	2/27	Gary Clark
	Helen Ochs		Patricia Hershey
2/13	Alice Alt		Irma Logan
	Emily Newcomer	2/28	Arlene McCoy
	Michelle Owen		
	Elsie Sechler		

Special Dates - Anniversaries



Henry & Harriet Fornwalt
Lawrence & Louella Bair
William & Helen Hibschman
Frank & Shirley Vognet
Wilson & Blanche Doebler
Robert & Mary Schultz

SPECIAL THANK YOU'S

From St. Anthony's:

Dear Friends:

Thank you so much for your donation. We appreciate your kindness to us here at St. Anthony's. God bless you for your generosity.

May He give you peace—let his face shine upon you and bring you happiness each day of your life.

Lovingly, Sister Henry

From Camp Mount Luther:

Dear St. Mark's Lutheran Church:

New Year Greetings from Camp Mount Luther! We hope this letter finds you well in this season of Epiphany.

We thank you for your recent gift of \$75 to the Annual Fund (Synod Benevolence). We are indeed grateful for your generosity in helping us make Christ Known through Outdoor Ministries. Your support enables us to continue the tradition of providing a place set apart by God for worship, study, environmental education and Christian fellowship.

May God continue to bless you!

Sincerely, Chad Hershberger Zachary Hoffman

From Ronald McDonald House:

Dear Church Members:

The Ronald McDonald House of Danville would like to express our sincere appreciation for your tab donation on 12-5-05.

Our tab program has become a huge success thanks to your generosity.

Sincerely,

Ronald McDonald House

From Shepherd of the Streets:

Dear Friends of St. Mark's Lutheran Church:

Your recent offering of \$242.50 to the Shepherd of the Streets Ministry had truly made a difference to those in crisis. May you be doubly blessed in all that you do.

Thank you dearly for your gracious gift of love. Your donation is a blessing to this ministry, as well as those less fortunate. It is deeply appreciated.

Sincerely, J. Morris Smith

SPECIAL CONCERNS LIST

Patricia Alexander 1745 Chestnut St. Williamsport, PA 17701

Ruth Best Sycamore Manor 1445 Sycamore Rd., Rm 213 Montoursville, PA 17754

Nancy Bohartz 624 Sixth Ave. Williamsport, PA 17701

June Decker 338 Sherwood Ave. South Williamsport, PA 17702

Larue Dieter 2150 Warrensville Road Apt. 2 Montoursville, PA 17754

Jane & Luther Doebler Wmspt. Home, Apt. #115A Williamsport, PA 17701

Harriet Fornwalt 729 Wilson Street Williamsport, PA 17701

Doris Fortin Rose View Center 1251 Rural Ave., Room 2 Williamsport, PA 17701

Earl Foulkrod Sycamore Manor 1445 Sycamore Rd., Rm 403 Montoursville, PA 17754

Jean Gulliver 3039 Elimsport Road Montgomery, PA 17752 Charles Homan 2215 Warrensville Rd. Montoursville, PA 17754

Charlotte Hughes 140 Blueberry Lane Williamsport, PA 17701

Lucille Markel Rose View Center, Room 213 A 1251 Rural Ave. Williamsport, PA 17701

Geraldine Martin 1900 Ravine Rd. Rm. 109 Williamsport, PA 17701

Anne Miller 947 Hepburn St. Williamsport, PA 17701

Jane Oakes 833 Funston Avenue Williamsport, PA 17701

Frank Pile Manor Care S., Rm. 52 Williamsport, PA 17701

Anne Rhodes c/o Carole Finn 20308 Cabana Drive Germantown, MD 20876

Dorothy Rivetti 450 Center Street Apt. 505 Williamsport, PA 17701

Marian Rubendahl 1900 Ravine Road Bldg. C Williamsport Home Apt. 1010 Williamsport, PA 17701 James Sheaffer Rose View Court Rm. 321 1251 Rural Ave. Williamsport, PA 17701

Mary Helen Scinicarello Danville St. Hospital Ward #311 Danville, PA 17821

James Sechler Manor Care N. Rm. 202 Williamsport, PA 17701

Geraldine Shipman 1900 Ravine Rd. Apt. #222A Williamsport, PA 17701

Fred Stover 600 Bayard St. Ext. SW S. Williamsport, PA 17702

Kester & Eleanor Sobers 425 W Highland Ave. S. Williamsport, P A 17702

Ira Tuxford 1838 Blanchard Ave. Williamsport, PA 17701

Ralph Zeigler Sr. Rose View Court 1251 Rural Ave., Apt. 209 Williamsport, PA 17701

HEALTH, HEALING AND WHOLENESS



In the past few weeks I've found myself wondering how Mary must have felt in the days following Jesus birth. In artwork, she is typically depicted with a demure smile, radiating happiness and joy. What must it have been like to give birth to your first child, away from family, in less than hospitable conditions? In Matthew's account, soon after the birth, Joseph and Mary are then uprooted and on an unexpected trek to Egypt! What was going through her mind? In Luke's account, in response to the shepherds' stories, "Mary treasured up these things and pondered them in her heart" (Lk. 2:19 NIV), so we assume she had a smooth transition to motherhood. In a sense she appears to be the picture of "perfect" motherhood.

But how do we console the woman who experiences a more difficult period of adjustment - one that is better expressed in Psalms 13:2, "How long will you hide

your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart?" I am referring to the woman who suffers post-partum depression.

Within 48 hours of delivery, hormones rapidly drop and researchers appear to link this to the onset of depression in some women. But unlike the "baby blues", postpartum depression does not lessen within a week to ten days. Instead it can occur any time within the first year after birth. Any combination of the following symptoms that last longer than two weeks may be signs of depression: feeling restless and irritable; feeling sad, hopeless and overwhelmed; crying a lot; having no energy or motivation; sleeping too little or too much; trouble focusing, remembering, or making a decision; feeling worthless and guilty; withdrawal from friends and family; overwhelming anxiety; even being afraid of hurting the baby or oneself (WomensHealth.gov). Often a woman suffers in silence because she feels too ashamed to admit that she does not feel overjoyed by this new addition to her life.

Factors which compound postpartum depression are: doubting ones ability to be a good mother by setting up expectations of perfection; being physically exhausted due to the disruption of sleep patterns; for working mom's, adjusting to a new routine; feeling a sense of loss in the changing of ones identity; having less free time; lack of a good support system; having suffered from depression prior to pregnancy.

Women suffering from depression following childbirth, need to be taken seriously, not shamed. Untreated, postpartum depression can interfere with the mother's ability to form a strong emotional bond with her child. Usually a combination of psychotherapy, sometimes medication, and establishing social support – all factors in treating regular depression - will work to alleviate the problem. If medication is ordered, and the mother is nursing, she should be sure to report this to the prescribing physician – many medications can be passed on to the infant.

Other things that can help: finding someone to talk to – another mother, a friend, your spouse – someone who can be trusted to share real feelings; consciously carve out at least 15 minutes each day to do something for herself – soak in the tub, read, take a walk, pray; stop trying to be the "perfect mother" – adjusting to a baby can be chaotic; don't spend a lot of time alone – get out of the house; talk with other mothers – do a mom's Bible study; try not to make drastic life-altering changes immediately after the pregnancy, and if these changes are unavoidable – like relocating to Egypt – set up some support to help get through it.

Don't suffer in silence. Speak to your parish nurse, your pastor, your doctor or midwife. There is no reason to feel ashamed. In spite of the philosophy Mr. Tom Cruise recently espoused, postpartum depression is much more complex than not "getting the right vitamins".

Debbie Best, Program Coordinator Congregational Health Ministries and Family Life Service Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries

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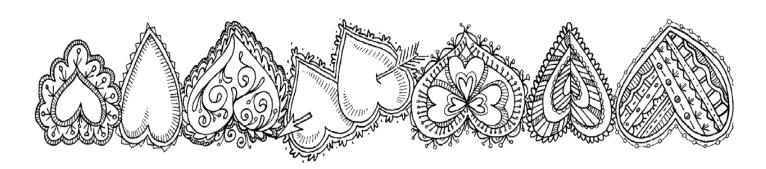
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