

eCURRENTS

LITTLE RIVER UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Editor: H.E. Beckwith

Endings and Beginnings

Last Sunday we concluded worship singing Brian Wren's hymn *This Is a Day of New Beginnings*. While the words didn't fit the moment precisely, the spirit of that hymn certainly did. Little River is experiencing the first tremors of a seismic change. The week before, I announced my retirement as of August 31, 2009, when I will be 65, and Ginna announced she will leave Little River as of November 30, 2009, when she will step back from full-time ministry. Jim Bell will vacate his part-time position the same time as I.

If you haven't seen our letters, please ask for copies at the office; they set the context more adequately than this space allows. We hope and pray that in the year remaining to us we will be able to grieve boldly, plan creatively, and joyfully honor the ministry we have shared together. As the hymn proclaims: "This is a day of new beginnings; our God is making all things new."

Verne

Church Council: Not Green Yet

Church Council will postpone its June 18 discussion of "greening" our church. Watch for a new date.

Summer Schedule

Worship, church school: From now through August, we will all worship together Sundays at 9:30. Care is offered for children age two and under; children age 3-9 will begin in worship, then after the Time with Children they may either remain in worship or attend class.

Office hours: Starting Monday, June 30, the church office will close at 2:30. Normal hours (9-4:30) resume Monday, August 25.

Currents: The next deadlines are a month apart: Thursdays July 17 and August 14 at 2:30. The fall schedule resumes Thursday, September 4 at 4:30.

Gifts and pledges: And don't forget that our ministries (and operating expenses) continue, even when you're on vacation. Please arrange to keep your pledges and offerings current while you are away.

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Next deadline: Thu. July 17, 2:30

lrucc.org/Currents/Currents_Schedule.html

Church Family Needs Support

Deacon Nancy Carey is coordinating Little River's support for our member family whose four-year-old was diagnosed with leukemia last week and will be hospitalized for a month receiving chemotherapy. We need offers in three categories: meals, child care, and house cleaning. Please contact Nancy with your offer of support ([ncarey \[at\] mathematica-mpr \[dot\] com](mailto:ncarey[at]mathematica-mpr[dot]com)).

Mortgage & Foreclosure Clinics

Virginia Housing Authority will hold free mortgage clinics in Woodbridge and Chantilly from 9:00 to 5:00 Saturday, June 21. These clinics aim to give Virginians at risk of foreclosure vital information to assist them in facing this serious challenge. Each participant will be offered a 20-minute general foreclosure-prevention session and an individual face-to-face session (pre-registration required) with a certified housing counselor trained in loss mitigation and foreclosure prevention. Expect to spend up to 90 minutes at the clinic.

Support Day for Torture Victims

Thursday, June 26 is International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. Our local area will see a variety of activities to highlight the need to end torture, culminating in a 24-hour vigil in Lafayette Square, attended by survivors of torture from around the world.

Amnesty International will display a replica of a Guantanamo detention cell Wednesday-Sunday, June 25-29. The cell is expected to be placed on the Washington Monument grounds near 14th Street. Visitors will be able to learn what they can do to make their views known to policymakers. Visits to members of Congress will take place Monday, June 30.

If you would like more details, contact Gay Gardner ([gaygardner\[at\]msn\[dot\]com](mailto:gaygardner[at]msn[dot]com)).

Book Study: *Menu for the Future*

Several groups are organizing this summer to read the book *Menu for the Future*, offered through the Ecostewards Alliance and its Chesapeake Earth Institute, which is an affiliate of the nonprofit Northwest Earth Institute. NEI is recognized as a national leader in the development of programs that empower individuals and organizations to protect ecological systems.

Menu for the Future is very timely considering recent food—and fuel—cost increases in the United States, as well as food shortages in parts of the world. It includes readings that explore food systems and their effects on society and ecological systems. It also provides insight into agricultural and individual practices that promote personal and ecological well-being, and it helps us consider our role in creating or supporting sustainable food systems. To find out more about *Menu for the Future*, visit www.nwei.org and click on the title.

Groups will include eight to twelve people, holding mostly open-ended discussions (with a little bit of structure) in meetings that last about ninety minutes. Each group will choose its own meeting dates and will accept volunteers to lead each session. The only cost is \$35 apiece for the book, payable to Ecostewards Alliance to cover printing and administrative costs.

The initial meeting will be a potluck dinner held on Sunday, June 29 at 6:30 at the Blueberry Hill Common House, 9701 Farmside Place, Vienna, in the community where Kenyon and I live. We hope to use subsequent meetings to highlight the produce- and sustainable-farming methods of the Potomac Vegetable Farms, which is adjacent to our property and is owned and operated by some of our neighbors.

If you wish to attend the first meeting and want a copy of the book, please e-mail me ([mebeets\[at\]aol\[dot\]com](mailto:mebeets[at]aol[dot]com)).

Betsy Erickson



Young Adults Engage the Bible

The new series “Push It! Young Adults Engage the Bible” asks critical questions and connects the Bible to real life. Join our young adults in their 20s and 30s as they get together at church the second and fourth Sundays of June, July, and August for lunch after worship. Come to any session for rousing discussions and who knows what else! Please contact the church office or Ginna if you are interested.

Quarterly Brochure Updates

The June-August supplement for the church Education & Enrichment Opportunities brochure is now available in the atrium. Please pick up copies for yourself and your friends and neighbors.

The deadline for submissions for the next edition—both the annual descriptive brochure and the quarterly schedule of events—is Wednesday, July 2. Please send write-ups to Darlene Lane ([darlene\[at\]lrucc\[dot\]org](mailto:darlene[at]lrucc[dot]org)).

Summer Sermon Talkback

Most Sundays during July and August, whoever is preaching will offer an opportunity for “talkback” beginning at 11:00 in Room 8. Grab a cup of coffee or tea, if that’s your desire, and engage the preacher with questions, comments, disagreements (surely not!?), or whatever. Feel free to leave when you must; the preacher will stay until the room is empty or until it’s noon—whichever comes first.

Healing Service

The quarterly healing service for those who are seeking healing of body, mind, or spirit will take place at 4:00 Sunday, July 6 in the sanctuary. This informal service includes the ancient rite of the laying on of hands as well as communion. Please speak with Verne or Ginna for more information.

Film and Faith

Little River’s summer film series moves to the Jubilee Room this year. Come on any of these four Sundays at 11:00 for a viewing, lunch, and discussion of films that address social-justice issues:

July 13: *Amazing Grace*—racism and slavery in the nineteenth century

July 27: *Crash*—race relations in our own time

August 10: *Dead Man Walking*—the death penalty

August 24: *El Norte*—illegal immigration

Conversations on Membership

Those who are considering membership in the congregation of Little River UCC are invited to attend the Conversations on Membership to be held 2:00-3:30 p.m. on two consecutive Sundays: July 13 (Session A) and 20 (Session B). Session A deals primarily with Little River UCC while Session B focuses on the United Church of Christ. Prospective members are encouraged to attend both A and B sessions, in any order or time of their choosing, before joining. Those ready to join will be received Sunday August 10. For additional information, please speak to Verne or Ginna.

Hands Across the Border

Little River's Board of Missions is alive and well! Not only does it fund a number of benevolences on behalf of our congregation, but the group has a vision to put their own hands directly into mission. Joe Petrusiak and I traveled to San Ysidro, California, on the US-Mexico border, to explore the challenges we are learning about concerning life in border towns. In effect, we did a site visit on behalf of Little River to explore possible venues for learning and mission in that area. We have been forever changed.

There is much work to do to bring the love of Christ and the teachings of Jesus alive for the people there. The Daniel F. Romero Center for Border Studies, one of the UCC's Centers for Education and Social Transformation, is an agent of change in which the United Church of Christ can find, and has delivered, grace. Carlos Correa is the Minister for Environmental Justice who resides there and leads immersion experiences into the shantytowns on the border. One hardly can walk ten feet without being greeted by someone who knows Carlos. His relationship with the people has given birth to changed policies and changed lives that have also healed God's creation.

Do you want to be part of that change? Joe and I hope you will consider participating in a mission trip to the border sometime soon. Just let one of us know!

Peace be with you so you can be peace for others,
Ginna

Help Send a Child to Camp

Would you like to enhance the summer for an inner-city child? Consider helping a child from Washington's Shaw community, the low-income area around 7th and R Streets NW, to spend two weeks hiking in the woods, swimming, and developing friendships with children from the entire metropolitan area at bayside Camp Letts near Annapolis.

The complete cost of sending a child to Camp Letts for two weeks is \$1100. Funding is also needed for special day trips for Camp Friendship, the local Shaw day camp. You may contribute any amount toward a

child's camp experience. Please make checks payable to Little River UCC with a memo Shaw Summer Camp. Financial gifts must be received by Monday, June 30.

Little River has been very supportive of the Shaw summer camp experience in the past and that generosity is greatly appreciated.

Playground Renovation

Our friends from the Annandale Co-op Preschool are renovating the playground this summer. By the end of July, they will have removed and replaced all equipment, graded the area, and laid new mulch. The playground is closed during this period, but we look forward to enjoying the new space when it is finished.

Book Group: *Salem Falls*

All Little River women are invited to meet on Sunday, July 20 at noon in the conference room for the next Women's Book Group discussion. The subject is *Salem Falls* by best-selling author Jodi Picoult (paper: Washington Square Press, 2002), a modern-day recasting of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. Publishers Weekly calls it "genuinely suspenseful and at times remarkably original," a "romance-mystery-morality play" whose protagonists "are forced to confront the difference between who people are and who they say they are." Amazon.com finds this story of a wronged girls'-school teacher seeking a new life in a small town "a skillfully sustained work of deep emotion and innovative plotting."

Recycling Batteries: Correction

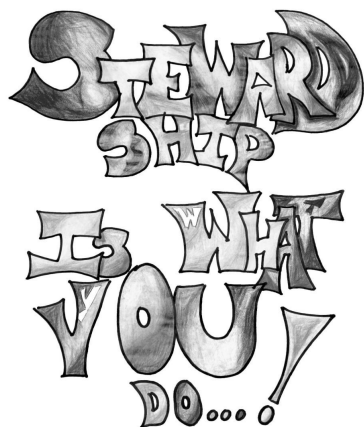
In my Time with Children on June 8, I shared some dated information. In Fairfax County, household alkaline batteries (non-rechargeable AA, AAA, C, D, and 9-volt) "can be disposed of safely in household trash." The county recycling center will not accept these batteries. I apologize for the misinformation. —Verne
Hearing-aid, rechargeable, and car batteries should be recycled or taken to hazardous-waste collection points. See Batteries page of Fairfax County's website (fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/recycling/mat-bat.htm) for complete details. —Ed.

A Note of Gratitude

We wish to thank our many dear friends at Little River for your outpouring of sympathy and support following Elizabeth's death. The church, and this church, was central in her life, and your abundant caring is gratefully appreciated by all of us. Thank you.

The Beckwiths





Through worship, prayer, education, and fellowship we grow in our understanding of God. So does our church brochure begin to describe who we are and what we do. Of these four fundamental aspects of our experience, education—for adults as well as for children and youth—is no less important than the other three.

Each year brings a varied array of informative and thought-provoking adult learning opportunities. Like the 1950s television program *Omnibus*, the past year's series offered "something for everyone." Richard Davidson led Bible study sessions on Monday mornings. Public Policy and Faith featured discussions led by Rob Peters on the 2007 UCC General Synod and its resolutions, as well as sessions by several guest speakers on a host of critical social issues. The Footsteps series focused on the era when Spain's Christians, Muslims and Jews managed to live in relative harmony. Our Lenten evening series examined the ramifications of the Lord's Prayer. Aging in Action offered information, support, and access to specialized resources. Verne's upcoming discussion of Marcus Borg's *Jesus: . . . a Religious Revolutionary* complements the Women's Book Group's talks on less overtly theological literature. Other one-time programs brought us both in-house and outside speakers and discussion leaders. Still to come is this summer's Film and Faith series. And we can count on next year's lineup being no less enlightening and meaningful.

Of course, none of these programs could happen without the efforts of the many people involved in brainstorming, arranging for knowledgeable and engaging leaders, and preparing and leading individual sessions. Nor could they succeed without the support of our pastors or the staff and volunteers who put together materials and inform us through bulletins, calendars, the newsletter, and our website. And obviously they could not take place in the absence of a physical facility to hold them in. We are fortunate in having a building that is well suited to holding such sessions, thanks to the building programs the congregation has undertaken over the years and our continuing volunteer and financial support in caring for it.

Adult education is an essential part of what we do as a church. Helping make that happen is something we all do. Here, as in all of our other programs, *stewardship is what you do.*

Gary Allen

Comment on Safe-Church Policy

A draft of Little River's Safe Church Policy Concerning Abuse Prevention is available on Little River's web site: click on Our Life Together > Caring. Church members and friends are encouraged to study the proposal and share any feedback with Hal Price, who chaired the committee that developed this proposed policy, or with moderator Barbara Lowrey.



LITTLE RIVER

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Links: Events, People, News

- **Calendar:** Find out about church events at www.lrucc.org by clicking on About Us > Calendar, or pick up a printed copy of *Currents*.
- **Passages:** Pick up a printed copy of *Currents*, or subscribe to the e-mail edition, to share the latest celebrations and concerns in our church family—as well as the latest address, phone, and e-mail updates and changes in our church organizations.
- **UCC news:** Read the latest news from the United Church of Christ and learn about our denomination at www.lrucc.org > About Us > Our Links > The UCC
- **Currents by e-mail:** See the *Currents* web page at www.lrucc.org, > About Us > Newsletter: *Currents*, or write [webteam \[at\] lrucc.org](mailto:webteam@lrucc.org).

LITTLE RIVER UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Submissions: Include your name and phone or e-mail address (not for publication). Please submit electronically if possible (MS Word, Word Perfect, or plain text; e-mail to [currents \[at\] lrucc \[dot\] org](mailto:currents@lrucc.org)). Submit notices 3 weeks ahead of events if possible.