



## Faith-Based Voting Reconsidered

To what extent does your faith inform your vote? Do specific biblical passages serve as a guide? Maybe particular religious principles? My assumption is that faith does play a part in how we vote, but I'm not sure we always give it the thought it deserves.

Four years ago many evangelical voters used very narrow criteria to make judgments about which candidate's policies were more Christian—abortion and homosexuality being chief among those criteria. Thanks to a very concerted effort by some evangelical leaders to identify broader (and more biblically-based) issues such as the environment, health care, and the poor, this year we are witnessing a dramatically different climate with a broad range of concerns being highlighted and addressed. Hallelujah!

How about ourselves? Can you (can I?) readily list the issues of concern to our Christian faith? Having done so, can we offer a basic biblical rationale for why we take the position we do? Such a simple exercise may be quite instructive, and it may prepare us to be

more articulate the next time someone asks us how we are going to vote!

*Verne*

## Spring into Fall

- **Worship at 9:30 & 11:00** resumes September 7.
- **Church school** for *all* ages also starts September 7. Register 8:50-9:20. Children begin in worship at 9:30 and go to class after the dedication of teachers. Public Policy & Faith meets at 11:00.
- **Choirs:** Sanctuary Choir starts Thursday, August 28. Contemporary Choir and youth choirs begin in early to mid-September—see "Sing! Sing! Sing!" page 2.
- **Confirmation class** introduction for parents takes place Sunday September 7; class starts Sunday September 28—see details on p.2.
- **Office hours** of 9:00-4:30 are already in effect.
- **Currents'** biweekly schedule has resumed. See the box below for deadline information.

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**Next deadline: Thu. September 4, 4:30**  
[lruc.org/Currents/Currents\\_Schedule.html](http://lruc.org/Currents/Currents_Schedule.html)

## Sept. 28: One Service, One Forum

On September 28 there will be **no 11:00 worship**. Instead, there will be an important congregational forum featuring Central Atlantic Conference Minister John Deckenback and Associate Conference Minister Kwame Osei Reed. They will outline the process whereby a UCC congregation seeks new pastoral leadership and will answer the congregation's questions.

## Education & Enrichment Events

The 2008-9 Educational and Enrichment brochure is now in the narthex, along with its September-November quarterly calendar. They will be mailed only on request, so while you're at church pick up one of each to learn about the year's programs and details of fall events.

## Welcome, New Members!

Little River welcomed three new members on August 10. Pick up a printed or e-mail edition *Currents* to read introductions. Congratulations to all!

## Casseroles for Homeless Women

The Dinner Program for Homeless Women's head chef, Kevin Holloway, is on vacation through August 31. As you know, the Dinner Program must go on serving hot nutritious meals in his absence, so they are asking us to donate casseroles. It takes ten 9x14 casseroles to feed the women who come each night. Can you help? Our church office has recipes if needed. If you have questions or can donate one or more casseroles, please contact the Dinner Program's Sarah Hay (202-737-9311).

## Hymn Sunday: August 31

Once again, Labor Day weekend worship will include a larger than usual selection of hymns, which will be chosen by the congregation. This year the challenge is to vote for a favorite from each of several periods and styles. Categories include Early Stalwarts (before c.1750), Perennial Standbys (c.1700-1860), Late Nineteenth Century, No Longer New (early twentieth century), Choruses (Taizé, "folk," etc.), Late Twentieth Century—and—Your *Real* Favorites!

In the Chalice Hymnal simply look up the author's and composer's dates for your favorite hymns, or see the suggestions in last Sunday's bulletin. Send your choices to the church office right away!

## Church School Teaching And You

As we quickly approach the start of a new church school year in September, we need you to volunteer to work with our children.

Critical needs are two teachers for the 2- and 3-year-olds, two teachers for the 12-13 traditional class and another teacher to help Robin Petrusak with the teens. These positions last the whole school year.

The Workshop Rotation classes need three guides to volunteer for four-month or longer stints, shepherding either the 6-7, 8-9 or 10-11 group as they rotate through their workshops each month. There are also many three-week opportunities for workshop leaders available throughout the year.

See the signup board in the narthex for details, and contact Mike Craven (*michael\_d\_craven [at] msn.com*), Jane Wallace (*janehwallace [at] junos.com*), or the church office to volunteer.

Thank you in advance for sharing with our youth.

## Sign Up for Directory Photos

Family and individual photos for our new pictorial directory will be taken Friday, Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday, September 5-6 and 8-9. Book your sitting in

the narthex or at *www.signup.olanmills.com* using our church phone number as a password.

Sitting times run 3:00-9:30 weekdays and 10:00-5:00 Saturday. Please select the earliest date and time that works for you. Allow an hour for your appointment.

Each household photographed will receive a free copy of the pictorial directory and one color 8x10 portrait. There is no obligation to buy portraits, though you will have the opportunity if you wish.

This is an important project that has greatest value only if everyone participates. The directory will help you get to know other families and new members in the congregation. Please sign up by Sunday, September 1. If you cannot make an appointment during the assigned dates but would like to be included in the directory, please contact Cici Thompson (*cicithom [at] aol.com*) to determine if other times can be arranged.

## A Tag Line for Little River

Have you sent in your ideas for a Little River UCC tag line—a pithy phrase that captures something genuine about our church? You have until the end of August! Address them to Dave Curtis (*davidcurtis [at] alum.mit.edu*) or leave them in the Evangelism Committee mailbox in the church office. Thank you!

## Sing! Sing! Sing!

Choir season is starting, and you're invited! Our four choirs welcome visitors and new singers. Share your vocal talents through any of the following:

The Sanctuary Choir welcomes all who love choral singing. Rehearsals are Thursday evenings at 7:30 starting August 28. Speak with Craig Stapert (*craig [at] lruc.org*) to learn more.

Salt of the Earth, for children ages 6-12, will hold its first practice for the singers *and* their parents on Sunday, September 7, from 11:00 to noon. If you would like to sign your child up for this joyous group, or if you have any questions, please contact Kenyon Erickson (*keeperken [at] aol.com*).

Joyful Noise is for youth in grades 6-12. It meets most Sundays 11:00-noon beginning September 14. Members have fun preparing and presenting a wide variety of music, including contemporary and rock, that enlivens worship. The group is led by Nancy Huddleston (*huddleston [at] nas.edu*). Kids, please join us!

The Contemporary Choir sings and plays music from around the world in styles ranging from folk to modern praise. The group rehearses alternate Sundays 12:15-1:15. It is also led by Nancy Huddleston. The 2008-2009 season will start with a rehearsal mini-retreat on Saturday, September 6, from 10:00 to 1:00 at Nancy's house. New singers are welcome!

## Youth: Campout and More

Attention all high-school age youth: Come to beautiful Burke Lake Park Friday-Saturday September 5-6 for hiking, games, worship, a campfire, and more! Meet 5:30 Friday afternoon at the camp store just outside the campground. Pickup at the camp store is at 4:00 Saturday afternoon. PF will cover basic costs. Planning to come? Reply to *darlene [at] lrucc.org* no later than Wednesday, September 3.

Other upcoming youth events:

### Sunday, September 7

- 10:30: Jr & Sr PF youth & parents, Jubilee Room

### Sunday, September 14

- 11:00: Y-GELI parents, Jubilee Room; video for youth
- 5:00-6:30: Jr PF begins!
- 6:00-8:00: Sr PF begins!

## Be an Usher!

One of the most important jobs in the church is that of usher. Ushers faithfully support the congregation at worship by providing a welcome, a bulletin, and a seat to everyone as they enter the sanctuary. They gather our offerings and present them on behalf of the congregation, and they straighten up the sanctuary after services. Ushers help the many individuals in worship come together as a true congregation.

There is no minimum age for ushers. We've had very young ushers, quite old ushers, and all ages in between. All that is needed is a friendly smile.

Little River is reorganizing its usher teams. Everyone who is interested is invited to meet Sunday, September 21 at 12:30 for a chance to learn how to be an effective usher. Current and potential ushers and those just curious about the position are all welcome.

## Aging Issues: Difficult Talks

On Sunday, September 7 from 4:30 to 6:00, Teresa Dunbar, MS, Little River's consulting gerontologist, will lead a shared discussion on broaching uncomfortable topics with a partner, family member, or other loved one. How do you bring up their declining health? Discuss their need to stop driving or accept assistance? Plan together for their incompetency or death? The group will explore ways to hold such conversations effectively and with respect.

The Supportive Group on Aging Issues meets the first Sunday of each month at 4:30-6:00. The next meetings will focus on "Caring for the Caregiver" on October 5 and "Brain Fitness" on November 2. Everyone is welcome to attend any or all sessions.

## Place Setters Fall Signup

Share meals and conversation with old and new Little River friends this fall. Place Setters offers four different ways to enjoy food and friendship this fall:

- **Dinner for Six**, where five to nine people gather in each other's homes on perhaps three occasions, sharing meals usually as a potluck.
- The **Lunch Gathering**, for people who have free time during the day or may not like to drive at night.
- The **Brunch Bunch**, which meets midday Sundays.
- The **Mini Dinner Group**, for those who may want to meet only two or three times rather than committing to the full four-month scheme.

Each group sets its own dates, times and menus, restaurant or home, adults-only or children-welcome.

Sign up at church for your choice of Place Setters Sundays September 7-28 for the October-January round.

## How Green Is Little River?

The adult Public Policy and Faith class resumes on Sundays at 11:00 with a series on our church and the environment. All are welcome to attend.

**September 7: The Greening of Our Church I.** The Trustees will lead a review of the recommendations of the Greater Washington Interfaith Power and Light for changing our behavior and our building to make our church environmentally sounder and save us money over time.

**September 14: The Greening of Our Church II.** Allison Fisher of Greater Washington Interfaith Power and Light will answer our questions raised by the September 7 discussion and provide guidance on implementing her suggestions.

**September 21: Fairfax County and Climate Change.** Mason District Supervisor Penny Gross, chair of the Board of Supervisors' Environment Committee, will discuss what our county is doing to combat global warming and to conserve scarce resources. Invite a friend or neighbor!

## Confirmation Class

An introductory session to the 2008-09 Confirmation Class will be held Sunday, September 28 from 5:00-6:00 p.m. in the Conference Room. If you are in the ninth grade or above, or at least 14 years old and have not received a letter of invitation, please contact the church office or speak to Verne. An orientation for parents will be held at 5:00 p.m. Sunday, September 7.



## Women's Book Group

*Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin is the selection for our September 28 book discussion. Please join us to talk about this much-talked-about nonfiction work.

A plan to scale the summit of K-2 by an American mountain climber in memory of his sister fails. After a harrowing descent, he takes a wrong turn which leads him to an isolated village in northern Pakistan. He vows to return to build a school for its children as a tribute to his beloved sister. Mortenson becomes immersed in Pakistani village life and travels between the United States and Pakistan to fulfill his mission of peace. Along the way, a generous endowment allows Mortenson to continue and expand his work. Part adventure, part intrigue, part travelogue, part romance, Greg Mortenson's story of his mission is a satisfying read.

## First Friday

It's almost time for another First Friday season! The first event will take place October 3 at 6:30: going for the gold at First Friday Olympics! Other themes for 2008 include the Old West on November 7 and Christmas characters on December 5.

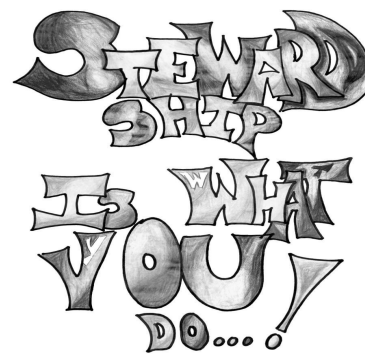
Each child must have a new registration form for the season. Forms can be found at [www.lrucc.org](http://www.lrucc.org)—click on Our Life Together > Fellowship > First Friday, and follow the link to the registration page. Fill out the General and Session Registration forms online and be ready to sign them in person on the day of the event. Or arrive early, bring your insurance information, and fill out the forms in person.

We are also looking for some fun-loving people to assist each month. The pay is low (nonexistent, actually) but the job satisfaction is high—and you get a free dinner! Contact Mike or Lorri at [firstfriday \[at\] lrucc.org](mailto:firstfriday[at]lrucc.org).

## Women's "Jubilee" Retreat

Women members and friends of Little River are invited to gather at Little River on Saturday, October 25 from 9:30 to 4:30 to explore and reflect on the idea of "jubilee" and its restorative promise for women. We will use selected stories of women from the Gospel of Luke as connecting points to our own lives. We will worship, share, and rest in quiet moments for renewal. The beautiful and peaceful grounds and labyrinth at Little River will be available throughout the day. A registration fee of \$30 covers materials and a delicious catered lunch.

Please contact the church to register by Friday, October 17. Scholarships are available by contacting Shirley Bloomquist [sbloomqu \[at\] aol.com](mailto:sbloomqu[at]aol.com).



Vibrant, meaningful programs for children and youth are one of the cherished cornerstones of our church. Financial support from the congregation helps to make possible so many opportunities for our young people—from our church school for children of all ages, to our Joyful Noise and Salt of the Earth choirs, to our Youth Global Experiential Learning Initiative (Y-GELI).

This summer, four of our young people attended the UCC National Youth Event in Knoxville, Tennessee, with Mike Ross and Ginna Minasian Dalton as adult leaders. The four youth participants—Alek Erickson, Hilary Douglas, Rachel Ward, and Megan Dieselhorst—joined more than 2,000 other teens to learn how to be good stewards of creation. This year's theme was Living the Life . . . of Love, of Peace, of Green. By the time you read this, we will have heard about their remarkable experiences at the August 17 service.

Seven teens participated in the Y-GELI trip to Bridger, South Dakota, in August to work with the Lakota tribe. The focus of the experience is on racism and environmental justice. Several clean-up work projects are planned, as well as learning about the Lakota culture and experience.

One of our teens, Bryce Summers, chose to help the church with his Eagle Scout project for the Boy Scouts of America. For all of his life, Bryce loved to draw labyrinths, and still does. As he grew up, he found himself looking forward to walking the labyrinth after church school, and did so several times a year. When the time came to design his Eagle Scout project, Bryce decided he wanted to re-gravel the path of the labyrinth so others could continue to enjoy it as much as he has. On the day of the work party, over 30 members of our church and scouts from Troop 1131 joined to help Bryce with the project. They moved over 10 tons of stone dust, yet finished in record time. Bryce's one regret is that they finished too quickly—his dad was unable to return from a business trip in time to assist.

Your support enables our children and youth to experience and participate in significant ways in the life of the church and the world. Stewardship is what we do! We couldn't do it without you!

## New Life for Old Robes

After serving Little River for over 20 years, our old red choir robes will take on a second life with a new congregation. The robes were first offered to other congregations in the Potomac Association. No one needed them, so the Music Committee made them available through Craigslist. Less than five minutes after they appeared online, a missionary with Global Evangelistic Outreach requested them for a congregation in Greece. He and his wife picked up the robes and will ship them to their new home. The congregation includes a number of African immigrants with sewing and tailoring skills who can repair the robes for their choir.

*Rich Dodenhoff*

## Greetings from Our Missionary

Little River has had a relationship with Dr. Anil Henry for the past several years. As you may recall, he visited Little River last fall to tell us about the challenges he faces with his medical ministry in India. It was a most compelling evening. Keeping us posted on current projects, Dr. Henry reports that two new buildings have been added to the hospital's campus: a blood bank and a dormitory for single staff members.

He is also getting ready to raise money to buy another school bus as there are so many children to who would like to attend school but live too far away to walk. Students are educated in English so they have a real chance for a bright future. He is also looking into the possibility of constructing a new school building as classes are being held in an old bungalow. He asks that we keep him and his mission in our prayers.

Dr. Henry serves as Medical Director of the Mungeli Christian Hospital. As with all Global Ministries missionaries abroad, Anil works with a local partner—in his case, the Synodical Board of Health Services of the Church of North India.

## Thanks for Angelman's Support

Dear Little River Members and Friends,

On May 17, 2008, a number of youth from the Little River UCC Pilgrim Fellowship, accompanied by Joe Christiansen, Verne Arens, and Ginna Minasian Dalton, joined thousands from around the country to participate in a national walk to support research, education, and support for people of all ages affected by Angelman's syndrome. Angelman's syndrome is a genetic disorder caused by abnormal function of the gene UBE3A, which significantly affects physical and mental development.

We wish to express our gratitude for the overwhelming support exhibited by the Little River community. Thanks to the support of Little River, \$1100 was raised to "sponsor" those walking and was part of an overall national contribution which is anticipated to reach \$1,000,000 for those affected by Angelman's syndrome. Our young people were wonderful, not only helping to raise the sponsorships, but also in reaching out to T. and to others who participated in the walk on May 17.

We are blessed to have the support of so many. It will go a long way toward improving the lives of those affected by Angelman's syndrome. Further information is available at [www.angelman.org](http://www.angelman.org).

Sincerely,  
*T.'s family*

## Fair-Trade Sale

Little River will have Fair Trade products available again beginning Sunday, September 14.

The Fair Trade project will be trying a new brand of coffee this year, from Green Mountain Coffee Roasters.

So come by for a delicious product in support of small producers in less developed countries.





## Links: Events, People, News

- **Calendar:** Find out about church events at [www.lrucc.org](http://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](http://www.lrucc.org) > About Us > Our Links > The UCC
- **Currents by e-mail:** See the *Currents* web page at [www.lrucc.org](http://www.lrucc.org), > About Us > Newsletter: *Currents*, or write [webteam \[at\] lrucc.org](mailto:webteam@lrucc.org).

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**Currents** is published usually biweekly (monthly in summer) for the members and friends of Little River United Church of Christ, Annandale, Virginia, and is mailed third class or by e-mail (contact the office for instructions). A public version, *eCurrents*, is posted at [www.lrucc.org](http://www.lrucc.org); click on About Us > Newsletter: *eCurrents*.

**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.