



Second Life

Lately Sam's been teaching me about a new technology called "second life." The closest I come to understanding this is to frame it as virtual reality. Second Life technology is being considered for use in diagnosis and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder.

If we can reshape the brain to heal, then can't we surely reshape the heart to do the same? If so, then we are reshaping the mind, as the mind is more than the brain. One of my favorite books is titled *The Jewish Mind*. I value the text because its insights lift up the mystery and complexities of the human spirit. Why is that important to me? To put it simply, I believe that valuing the complexities of another ask something of our energies and takes time, so it personal, it's relational.

When we can allow ourselves to honor the complexities and mystery of humanity, perhaps we will be close to discovering the intriguing qualities of God, our Creator. Through the intricacies we hold within us we show each other life, and therefore God and truth are revealed.

If we can take some time to listen carefully, we can even help to heal a moment in another's story and bring them to another kind of "second life": a life that takes a tiny step forward to knowing a grace-filled and loving God who allows struggle.

Won't you consider sharing a story-moment with someone—and then share your church with them? Perhaps you could become a bridge to their "second life."

Peace,
Ginna

Conversations about Racism

The UCC Potomac Association presents "honest and challenging conversations about racism" on three Saturday mornings at 9:30-11:45 under the title "Building the Beloved Community in the Potomac Association."

The **October 11** session takes place at Bethesda UCC, 10010 Fernwood Rd., Bethesda, Maryland (www.bethesdaucc.org). "Dialogue & Action Toward Understanding & Dismantling Racism" features a keynote address by Dr. Cain Hope Felder, professor at the Divinity School at Howard University and editor of *The Journal of Religious Thought*.

On **November 1**, "Immigration & Racism" will be discussed at National City Christian Church, 5 Thomas Circle NW, Washington (www.nationalcitycc.org).

The final dialog, "Urban Poverty and Racism," will take place **November 15** at Covenant Baptist Church, 3845 S Capitol Street SW, Washington DC 20032 (www.covenantbaptistdc.org).

Blessing of the Animals

Bring your favorite animal(s) to a brief celebrative service of blessing in word and song on Sunday, **October 12** at 12:30. It will take place in the grove behind the narthex, or in the social hall if the weather is bad.

UCC "Steeple" Ads on TV

New television ads from the United Church of Christ will air through Tuesday, **October 14** on CNN, Bravo and BET as well as other local stations. Stay tuned and let your Evangelism Committee know what you think about these ads.

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Next deadline: Thu. October 16, 4:30
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Bikes for the World

Do you have an unwanted bicycle in your home? Consider donating it to Bikes for the World. Bikes for the World collects bicycles in the Washington metro area and ships them to developing nations in Africa, South America and the Caribbean to be used to transport people to school and work.

Bikes for the World will host a number of one-time collections in Northern Virginia this month, including:

- Saturday, **October 11**, 9:00-noon, St. Peter's in the Woods Church, 5911 Fairview Woods Drive, Fairfax Station 22039
- Saturday, **October 11**, 9:00-noon, St. Mary of Sorrows Catholic Church, 5222 Sideburn Road, Fairfax VA 22032
- Saturday, **October 18**, 12:00-4:00, REI, 3509 Carlin Springs Road, Baileys Crossroads VA 22041

Continuing collection sites include:

- Bikes of Vienna, 128A Church St. (703-938-8900)
- Oasis Bike Works, 10376 Main St., Fairfax VA 22030 (703-273-4051)
- Spokes Etc., 224 Maple Ave E, Vienna VA 22180 (703-281-2004)

For more collection information about the program, contacts for the October collections, and a list of future collection sites, please visit www.bikesfortheworld.org.

Claire Peterson

Christian Social Action Committee

Music & Spirituality Event

Little River is hosting a series of classes in music and spirituality led by Mary J. Morreale, a music therapist and UCC Commissioned Minister of Music. Sessions take place the four Mondays of October at 7:30. Ms Morreale is a professional musician, composer, and conference leader specializing in music as an avenue for spiritual development. She is currently the organist at First Christian Church in Falls Church.

The series, "Music and Mandala," combines active listening, meditation techniques, discussion, and the creation and interpretation of the Indian sacred circles known as *mandalas*. It offers many ways to experience God through the creative arts. Remaining sessions are:

- **October 13**: What is music and imagery?
- **October 20**: Experiences of music and mandala
- **October 27**: Mandala assessment and interpretation

Suggested donations are \$20 per class. Visit www.empowerinnovations.com or contact Mary ([mary\[at\]empowerinnovations\[dot\]com](mailto:mary[at]empowerinnovations[dot]com)).

Program & Budget Discussion

This fall the Stewardship Committee and Board of Trustees are hosting a discussion of our proposed budget—and the programs thus supported—on Sunday,

October 19, before members and friends determine their financial commitments for the coming year. We are striving to achieve a balance between "giving in gratitude for God's blessings," which is our underlying philosophy of stewardship, and a stated interest in better understanding the financial needs of the coming year before pledging.

So come prepared to learn and ask questions at 12:15 on October 19, in the sanctuary. Chairs of boards and committees will be present to describe their plans for the coming year. Child care will be provided.

OWL Retreat for Teens

Jennifer Atkinson & Eric Pankey will lead a retreat for all Little River teens based on the Our Whole Lives curriculum Friday, **October 24** from 5:00 to 11:00 p.m. Grounded in a holistic view of sexuality, OWL explores the development not only of bodies, but also of values, interpersonal skills, and an understanding of the spiritual, emotional, and social aspects of sexuality. Please bring \$5 for dinner. A permission form is required and must be turned in before the retreat. Reply by Friday, **October 17** to Eric ([epankey\[at\]gmu\[dot\]edu](mailto:epankey[at]gmu[dot]edu)).

Caring Hands

Caring Hands meets the second Sunday of each month from 11:00 to 1:00. Knitters and crocheters of all ages are invited to work on projects for others and to share patterns and ideas. Supplies and instruction are available for beginners. For more information contact Carrie Douglas ([bdouglas1\[at\]cox\[dot\]net](mailto:bdouglas1[at]cox[dot]net)). Or simply drop in on **October 12!**

Children's Sabbath

On **October 19**, Little River will join the many American places of worship which on that weekend will lift up the need for inclusion, support, and justice for children and their families in our society and in our communities. Developed by Children's Defense Fund, Children's Sabbath has been adopted by a broad variety of faith communities in our country.

Using the New Playground

You may have noticed the colorful new playground Annandale Co-Op installed over the summer. Little River children age 2-5 are welcome to play there, but for safety reasons, *older children are not permitted* to use the space. Also, please be aware that food and drink are not allowed inside the fenced area. Use the trash can at the gate. Thank you!

Public Policy and Faith

The Christian Social Action Committee invites people of all views—or simply with questions—to meet Sunday, **October 19** to discuss the moral dimensions of detainee treatment. What principles should govern the future treatment of suspected terrorists? How might the detention facilities at Guantanamo Bay be shut down? What degree of accountability should be sought for abusive treatment and policies leading to it? What role, if any, can we as Christians play in helping to resolve these issues? Discussion will also focus on the endorsement by our Church Council of the National Religious Campaign against Torture's proposed Declaration of Principles for a Presidential Executive Order on Prisoner Treatment and Torture.

We are especially fortunate to have the Rev. Dan Romero, a UCC leader for justice, with us on **October 26**. See the article on page 4.

On **November 2**, Anne Korin, chair of Set America Free Coalition and co-director of the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security (IAGS), will speak on how energy has become a vital element of global security, and how our nation can free itself from the grip of foreign energy. IAGS, a non-profit public educational organization focused on energy security, supports technologies that can be commercialized rapidly, harnessing domestic resources using next generation technologies with the goal of completely displacing imported oil. IAGS accepts no corporate or government funding or endowments in order to maintain its independent posture.

Public Policy and Faith meets most Sunday mornings at 11:00. All are welcome.

Colombia Trade and Rights

Freddy Caicedo, a human rights expert from Colombia, will speak Thursday evening, **October 23** at George Mason University in Fairfax about human rights and the proposed Colombia Free Trade Agreement. Having worked at great personal risk to boost awareness of the trade agreement in Colombia's war zones, Caicedo will bring a rare insider's perspective on the controversial agreement. Wellspring UCC, Centreville, will co-sponsor the presentation as part of its ongoing support for a sister church in Zambrano, Colombia, where violence has displaced rural farmers to crowded temporary housing in the town.

Mr. Caicedo, a veteran human rights investigator, educator, and organizer, has spoken out against the extermination of Afro-Colombian and indigenous groups through the Potomac Association and has documented crimes against humanity with Colombia's "Never Again" project. He argues that the NAFTA-style proposal now languishing in Congress is "not an agreement, but an imposition" that "would enrich the elite but ruin rural communities and small business owners while trampling the rights of workers."

Mr. Caicedo is touring the mid-Atlantic US with Witness for Peace, a politically independent grassroots organization created to support peace, justice and sustainable economies in the Americas by changing US policies and corporate practices.

The GMU event will take place at 7:00 p.m. in Student Union II, Room 5. See <http://www.gmu.edu/welcome/Directions-to-GMU.html> for directions, maps, and public transportation options. To find out more about the speaker, contact Ben Beachy ([wfpma \[at\] witnessforpeace \[dot\] org](mailto:wfpma[at]witnessforpeace[dot]org)).

Responses to Housing Hardships

Social Action Linking Together (SALT) advocates for social justice for the poor and vulnerable. SALT's legislative agenda calls for a modest increase in temporary assistance benefits and a rental assistance pilot program for low-wage earners. Come to SALT's fall conference on Saturday, **October 25** from 9:00-11:30 at St. Thomas à Becket Parish, Reston to learn how to make a difference. Find out more at www.S-A-L-T.org or contact John Horejsi ([jhorejsi \[at\] cox \[dot\] net](mailto:jhorejsi[at]cox[dot]net)).

The Affordable Housing Task Force of Faith Communities in Action will meet 7:00 Monday evening, **October 27** at Ravensworth Baptist Church, 5100 Ravensworth Road in Annandale. Speakers from the Fairfax County Executive's office and the Department of Housing and Community Development will discuss the foreclosure situation and what is being done about it. If you wish to attend please notify the Community Interfaith Liaison ([ciluser \[at\] fairfaxcounty \[dot\] gov](mailto:ciluser[at]fairfaxcounty[dot]gov)).

"Tents of Hope" for Darfur

As was announced last issue, our youth will participate in activities in October and November around Tents of Hope, a project supported by the UCC and the Christian Church (Disciples) that aims to increase awareness about the genocide and suffering in Darfur and among its refugees. Churches around the country will bring some 500 tents painted with messages of "hope, love, freedom, humanity, and peace" to the National Mall **November 7-9**. Our youth will attend workshops, presentations, concerts, and worship with other Potomac Association youth.

In preparation for the rally, everyone is invited to join a painting party **October 12!** Help write messages on canvas squares to be made into tents in Chad.

Can you host Tents of Hope visitors in your home November 7-9? Please contact Carrie Douglas ([bdouglas \[at\] cox \[dot\] net](mailto:bdouglas[at]cox[dot]net)). And learn more about Tents of Hope at www.tentsofhope.org.



Update on Women's Retreat

Women members and friends of Little River UCC are invited to gather at church on Saturday, October 25 from 9:30 to 4:30 to reflect on the idea of "jubilee" and its restorative promise for women. We will connect stories of women from the gospel of Luke to our own lives. We will worship, share, and rest in quiet moments for renewal. Little River's beautiful, peaceful grounds and labyrinth will be available throughout the day.

To register, please contact the church by Friday, **October 17**. A fee of \$20, payable at the door, covers materials and a delicious catered lunch. Registration after October 17 costs \$25. Scholarships are available; contact Shirley Bloomquist (*sbloomq [at] aol [dot] com*).

Fairfax VolunteerFest

Volunteer Fairfax invites you to bring your family and friends to volunteer at the fourteenth annual VolunteerFest® on Saturday, **October 25**. Part of the national "Make a Difference Day," this community-wide day of service engages more than 700 volunteers around Fairfax County at schools, libraries, parks and nonprofit agencies.

Volunteer projects include building outdoor classrooms, painting offices, creating a wildlife habitat and environmental cleanups. Service projects start mid-morning and end around lunch time. Make the most of your Saturday and volunteer.

Over the last thirteen years, VolunteerFest® has engaged more than 15,000 volunteers at 490 projects for a total of 47,000 hours of service to the community.

Visit www.volunteerfairfax.org and click on VolunteerFest 2008. Select a project from the list and click "Sign Up" to register yourself and any others who will volunteer with you. Volunteers under the age of 18 must fill out a waiver form available on the website.

A Morning with Dan Romero

On Sunday, **October 26**, The Rev. Daniel F. Romero, a leader for justice in the UCC, will preach at 9:30 and lead the Public Policy and Faith discussion on environmental justice and immigration at 11:00.

A native of Los Angeles, Rev. Romero is both an ordained minister and a lawyer, specializing in immigration and international law. He has served local churches, headed the UCC Southern California-Nevada

Conference, and served the national UCC and the National Council of Churches in a variety of capacities. As the UCC's General Secretary for Mission Programs, Rev. Romero helped guide the merger of UCC and Disciples overseas programs into our joint Global Ministries. He is committed to developing ministries that serve truly ecumenical and multicultural communities, as witnessed in his book *Our Futures Inextricably Linked: A Vision of Pluralism* (United Church Board for Homeland Ministries).

In his honor, the UCC's Daniel F. Romero Center for Border Ministries was established near the California-Mexico border to foster justice through ecumenism.

Confronting Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is defined as a pattern of coercive behaviors, including physical, emotional, sexual, psychological, and many other avenues of threat and intimidation. It occurs in families of all ages, nationalities, ethnicities, and socio-economic and

religious backgrounds. October is the designated month to recognize domestic violence among our communities in an effort to help end this epidemic that afflicts our country.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors established the Domestic Violence Prevention Policy and Coordinating Council to guide the development of a community-wide effort to promote safety and security for victims of abuse and accountability for perpetrators. The Council considers domestic violence a crime not only against the individual, but also against the community, and it seeks to stop it by enabling the community to act together.

To learn more about what can be done to end domestic violence in Fairfax County, consider joining Faith Communities in Action's Interfaith Domestic Violence Prevention Task Force or by contacting the chair, Rev. Rose Miles-Robinson (*ciluse [at] fairfaxcounty [dot] gov*). Victims of domestic violence can contact the Victim Assistance Network (703-360-7273) or the Women's Shelter (703-435-4940) any time of day or night.

For more information contact the Domestic Violence Coordinator or visit the website www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dsm/dviolence/coordcommstrategy.htm.

Pam Binninger

Christian Social Action Committee.





Tell All in the Social Hall

The Stewardship Committee invites you to share ways in which you know others are living our stewardship theme, Stewardship is What You Do! Please take a minute to jot an observation on the poster board surrounding the theme logo on the Social Hall bulletin board—with or without attribution. In what way is someone you know serving others? Conserving the environment? Teaching or learning? Being a good citizen? Or sharing meaningfully?

Let's fill up the space with our notes, remembering that Vanya Craven started it all with his fantastic drawing of *Stewardship is What You Do!*

Book Group: India in Ferment

The Women's Book Group is reading *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai in preparation for discussion on Sunday, **November 2**, at 12:15 pm. All church members and friends are invited to participate.

The Inheritance of Loss is set in the Darjeeling District of northeastern India, a narrow spit of mountainous land that extends north between Nepal and Bhutan. A seemingly endless array of fascinating characters brings to life the tensions between colonial India and modern India, between varying ethnic heritages, between the East and the West.

"Although it focuses on the fate of a few powerless individuals," begins a New York Times book review, "Kiran Desai's extraordinary new novel manages to explore, with intimacy and insight, just about every contemporary international issue: globalization, multiculturalism, economic inequality, fundamentalism and terrorist violence. Despite being set in the mid-1980s, it seems the best kind of post-9/11 novel."

Ms Desai was awarded the Man Booker Prize for this work in 2006.





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).

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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.