

# eCURRENTS



LITTLE RIVER UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Editor: H.E. Beckwith

## Faith: Wall or Bridge?

During our recent trip to Nova Scotia to celebrate our grandson's first birthday, I learned that, by law, election campaigns in Canada usually last no more than sixty days. Imagine that: only two months of commercials, debates, op-eds, phone calls, pundits, signs, etc.

As our own presidential election comes to a close, I am struck by the differing ways faith is playing a role. Some faith groups and religious leaders find ways to circumvent IRS requirements and, essentially, make it known to the faithful how to cast their ballots. Others put forward non-negotiable issues, such as abortion, which determines how the person in the pew should vote. We in the United Church of Christ are among those denominations which lift up a broad range of biblical values (such as promoting peace and well-being, human dignity and care of creation) while respecting each person's need to vote their faith and conscience.

I had no difficulty deciding for whom I would vote this year; I suspect that may have been true for most of you also. And while I am hopeful my candidate will prevail, I am concerned about the numerous and tremendously challenging issues which await whoever enters the Oval Office. Come January 20 we will need to set the rhetoric and partisanship aside as, collectively, we roll up our sleeves and get to work. As a Christian

people it falls to us to operate out of a stance of hope rather than fear as we continue to bring our faith to bear upon public issues—thinking globally and acting locally (as the bumper sticker says)—while praying without ceasing.

*Verne*



**CONSECRATION SUNDAY: November 9** On Consecration Sunday, members and friends of Little River will bring forward and consecrate our pledges of financial support for our church in 2009. If you are unable to attend worship on the 9th, please use the envelope provided in your stewardship mailing to return your pledge card to the church. However, if you do miss Consecration Sunday, you also will miss the annual fun and festive Celebratory Coffee Hours hosted by your Stewardship Committee!

## For the Recently Deceased

We will offer prayers of thanksgiving on **Sunday, November 23** for loved ones who have died during the past twelve months. We invite you to contribute the names of family members and close friends whose loss you mourn by contacting the church office. Please indicate your relationship to the deceased and, if you submit a name in writing, please include help with pronunciation if it is likely to be needed.

## Fair Trade Sale

With autumn here and winter approaching, it's an ideal time for enjoying a hot tea or a morning cup of coffee—freshly brewed and fairly traded, of course! Buy yours **Sunday, November 16** at the Fair Trade table.

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**Next deadline: Thu. November 14, 4:30**  
[lruc.org/Currents/Currents\\_Schedule.html](http://lruc.org/Currents/Currents_Schedule.html)

## Foreclosure Relief in Fairfax

Home foreclosure rates have increased by 392% in Fairfax County since September 2007, according to an October 1 article in *Fairfax Times*. This alarming rate of foreclosure can lead to problems such as vacant houses blighting neighborhoods, increasing crime, falling property values for neighbors, and evictions of blameless renters in foreclosed buildings. At a recent meeting of Faith Communities in Action, John Payne of the county government spoke about the county's three-pronged response to this fast-growing problem:

- Assistance to homeowners in distress: Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development and the Virginia Housing Development Authority offer counseling to homeowners at risk of foreclosure. This service can be reached at 703-FAIRFAX (324-7329).
- The Silver Lining Initiative to aid purchases of foreclosed homes: This program offers second-mortgage loans of up to \$90,000 at no interest to first-time buyers who are purchasing foreclosed townhouses and single-family houses.
- Neighborhood preservation: The county is assisting homeowners in maintaining the safety and appearance of neighborhoods hit by foreclosure problems. In addition, the county will purchase up to ten dilapidated foreclosed properties and restore them so they can be sold to first-time home buyers and non-profit organizations that offer affordable rental housing.

More information about these programs can be found at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/foreclosures/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/foreclosures/) or by calling 703-FAIRFAX (324-7329).

## Tents of Hope Schedule

Senior High PF youth will meet at church **Saturday, November 8** for a 3:15 drive to meet up with other Potomac Association youth at Rock Spring UCC in Arlington. After unloading overnight gear, they will head to Ballston Metro station, arriving on the Mall by 5:00 for the Gathering of the Tents events and returning to Rock Spring by 10:00 for fun and sleep.

After breakfast, everyone returns to the Mall for the interfaith service and the blessing of the tents at noon, then back to Rock Spring and to Little River by 2:00.

Adults who have volunteered to help downtown have their individual schedules.

The campaign continues as Senior PF members collect used cell phones for recycling, with proceeds going to Tents of Hope and other groups working to end the suffering in Darfur. Look for the colorful box in the atrium through **Sunday, November 16**.



## National Anti-Torture Witness

Please join with members of other Washington area congregations on **Wednesday, November 12** at 11:30 at The United Church, 20th & G Streets NW, for a gathering in support of a "Declaration of Principles for a Presidential Executive Order on Prisoner Treatment, Torture, and Cruelty."

The principles were proposed by the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, the Center for Victims of Torture—a treatment facility in Minneapolis for torture survivors—and Evangelicals for Human Rights. They have been endorsed by UCC President John Thomas and by our own Church Council.

Many participants will bring anti-torture banners their congregations have been displaying outside their buildings. From The United Church, participants will make a solemn five-block walk to the White House, where various religious leaders will offer brief remarks.

This gathering coincides with meetings around the country in which members of Congress will meet with constituents asking them to endorse the Declaration and to urge the new President-elect to issue an Executive Order incorporating its six principles.

Find out more about the National Day of Witness at [www.nrcat.org](http://www.nrcat.org), where the text of the Declaration is on view and those who wish can sign the on-line petition endorsing it.

*Gay Gardner*

## Conversation About Racism

"Urban Poverty and Racism," the last in the UCC Potomac Association's series of "honest and challenging conversations about racism," will take place at 9:30-11:45 a.m. on **Saturday, November 15** at Covenant Baptist Church, 3845 S Capitol Street SW, Washington DC 20032 ([www.covenantbaptistdc.org](http://www.covenantbaptistdc.org)).

## Climate Change and Hunger

Public Policy and Faith's series on climate change continues **Sunday, November 16** at 11:00, when Mark Prell will lead a discussion on "Climate Change: Hunger Problems Where? When? Solutions Here? Now?" Mark will review the phenomenon's possible effects on agriculture and hunger, and will invite discussion on private and public actions that can address those challenges. The perspectives of the farmer, the engineer, the pastor, and the economist will be outlined. What views do you have? Come and share.

## Demystifying Death

Aging in Action's next program, on Sunday, **November 16** at 4:30, gives insight and understanding into the physical and spiritual aspects of the dying process. The program begins with a look at the physical process of dying. First, Albert Kassabian, Esq. will discuss the legal and physical aspects of the death process, including a brief review of Sherwin Nuland's book *How We Die: Reflections on Life's Final Chapter*. And Dr. Richard Binder, a long-time local oncology specialist, now retired, will illuminate life's final stages from a medical perspective.

Next, Ginna Minasian Dalton will explore the theology of dying from the perspective of her own experience, and Linda Anderson will draw on her career as a former hospice nurse and current executive director of US Oncology to lead a discussion on comfort, support and love at the end of life.

Those who would not feel comfortable at the medical presentation are welcome to arrive at 5:00 for Ginna's and Linda's discussions.

## Ember Evening: Hour of Calm

Order the turkey, the ham, the Thanksgiving decorations, the Christmas decorations! Do the shopping, the wrapping, the baking, the cards, the cooking, the cleaning! Take care of the in-laws, the kids, the pets! And what do you get? *Holiday overload!*

Ember Evening takes us away. Designed to prepare us spiritually for the upcoming holiday season, Ember Evening is the calm before the rush, a time of quiet personal reflection guided by music, prayer, and silence. Led by Ginna, this hour-long service will held **Wednesday, November 19** at 7:30 and is open to all who wish to attend.

## Work Day and Projects

Our next work day is scheduled for **Saturday, November 29**, and we will be raking leaves. If you're staying home for Thanksgiving, this will be a great opportunity to work off some of those turkey dinner calories (but beware: coffee and donuts will be provided). Bring the whole family!

If you can't make the scheduled work day, we have lots of indoor and outdoor projects that can be done whenever you have time. Please contact Joanna Knoll ([knollfamily1 \[at\] cox.net](mailto:knollfamily1[at]cox.net)) or Ben Northrup ([fbniv \[at\] aol.com](mailto:fbniv[at]aol.com)) for more information.

## Tax Break for IRA Recipients

If you are 70½ years or older with an Individual Retirement Account, the recent extension of the IRA rollover provision may provide you a tax-saving opportunity. This provision of the \$700 million economic bailout bill exempts from taxable income any funds up to \$100,000 per year transferred from an IRA directly to a charitable organization. This provision is retroactive to January 1, 2008, so it applies to gifts made in 2008 as well as 2009.

We are qualified to receive such gifts. If you wish to pay all or a portion of your annual pledge or make a special gift from an IRA distribution, you will not be required to declare the distribution as income, and you will owe no tax on it. Such a direct transfer may save you money by lowering your income threshold for medical or miscellaneous itemized deductions, or it may save you additional taxes on Social Security income.

Remember, you must be at least 70½ years of age during the year you make such a donation, and you must have your IRA custodian transfer funds directly to Little River, not to you personally.

For further information, consult your IRA custodian, your tax advisor, or any member of the Endowment Fund Committee (Denny Bloomquist, George Leonard, Barbara Lowrey, Brian Payne, or Rob Peters).

## Brass Concert for Shaw

On **Saturday, December 6** at 7 p.m., our Westmoreland UCC church located at 1 Westmoreland Circle Bethesda, MD is hosting an enjoyable evening featuring the noted DC Chamber Brass group. A reception will follow and Christmas quilts will be on exhibit. An offering will be made to support the Shaw Community Ministry.

## Heartfelt Thanks

The Beckwith family gives thanks from the bottom of our hearts to the pastors, staff, and so many, many members and friends and former members of Little River. You wrote and called and visited Beck during his final illness; you made the memorial service and reception a warm and rich time of remembrance; and you shared with us words of comfort, expressions of love, and overwhelming testimony to how deeply he touched so many lives. Thank you for touching and comforting ours.

*Hube, Kathy McCrea, Stanley  
Paul, Diane, Adam, Sarah, Joel*



# Introducing Our New Tag Line

*Little River United Church of Christ—welcoming diversity, independent thought, & faithful action*

Little River's new tag line was unveiled at worship on November 2. The Church Council selected this tag line because it captures several aspects of our life together, both within and beyond our walls. We try to be welcoming, but what are some of the specific things that we welcome? We welcome diversity—the fact that we are not all alike. We welcome independent thought—we think about life's deep questions, but recognize that we are at different stages in our faith journeys. Finally, we welcome action—action based on our understanding of how our faith calls us to live outside the church and in the community, the nation, and the world.

The tag line was selected from 41 recommendations submitted to the Deacons Evangelism Committee, which evaluated each suggestion jointly with the Communications Advisory Team for both substance (Does it convey an appropriate message?) and style (Is it a good tag line?). The Church Council made the final selection from among the most highly rated suggestions.





## 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).

### LITTLE RIVER UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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& faithful action*

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