



Going with the Flow

The nautical term “dead in the water” describes the phenomenon that takes place when a ship is halted from its own propulsion and keeps moving because of natural current of the water. The person at the helm knows from experience that the ship requires guidance even without mechanical or wind propulsion during this time. The way will be uncharted, but recognizing the situation is the first step. Dealing with that movement—when the flow of things gets beyond the navigator’s control—is doable.

That may be where some of us are. We had nothing much to do with the current economic situation. Little River UCC, Verne, Jim, and I had our courses set. Then things changed. And yet we are *all* called together to figure out how to do ministry in the midst of it. We may need to grieve the days gone by, but that has its helpful limits. (At least for this goal-oriented Myers-Briggs “J” type it does!) Then it’s time to move on, find where the possibilities and potentials are for propulsion, and figure out how to navigate these waters with creativity and meaning.

We have been given inner gifts and vision by the grace of God. Now we are beckoned to discern them.

All aboard!

Peace,
Ginna

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Next deadline: Thu. December 11, 4:30
lrucc.org/Currents/Currents_Schedule.html

Annual Meeting January 25

The 2009 annual meeting of Little River United Church of Christ will take place **Sunday, January 25** at 11:00 a.m. Principal business of the meeting will include receipt of the annual reports for 2008, election of officers and other leaders, adoption of a budget for 2009, consideration of a Declaration of Principles of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, and other business as may be appropriate. Most of the Annual Report will be available by Sunday, January 18. (Financial data will not be ready until meeting day.)

Because of the meeting, **worship will take place at 9:30 only**. Child care will be available during the meeting. Consider bringing a nutritious snack for your child (or yourself!) in case the meeting runs long.

The official call to the meeting, possibly including more information, will be issued later this month.

Film Explores Detainee Abuse

The Christian Social Action Committee invites you on **Sunday, January 11** at 11:00 for a screening of “Taxi to the Dark Side.” This film, which won the Academy Award for Best Documentary in 2007, begins and ends with the story of an Afghan taxi driver mistakenly identified as a terrorist and killed during a torture session conducted by US troops. Soberly and methodically exploring several cases of abuse, it includes remarkably candid interviews with military personnel.

Our hope is that understanding these matters can contribute to identifying preventive measures.

Pledge Envelopes Available

If you haven't yet picked up your 2009 pledge envelope box, please look for it in the social hall next Sunday. If you made a pledge, you have been issued envelopes unless you will give electronically or have requested no envelopes.

Is your envelope box missing? Contact Stewardship chair Jan Curtis ([curtisjs1 \[at\] aol \[dot\] com](mailto:curtisjs1[at]aol[dot]com)) to clarify your pledge commitment. We have lots of envelope boxes—make a pledge and one can be yours!

Women's Groups

The **Women's Book Group** will be reading three very different books in the coming months.

For March they have chosen *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle* by David Wroblewski (HarperCollins, 2008). This story of a young mute boy growing up in rural Wisconsin is hard to put down. For generations the family has raised a special breed of dogs. What happens when an uncle reappears and Edgar's father dies creates a riveting family saga.

A new **Women's Covenant Group** is for women of Little River who are seeking candid, confidential, committed conversation with others in a small-group setting. The first eight to sign up by **Tuesday, January 20** will form the initial group, which will meet each Thursday at 1:00-2:30 beginning January 22. Others who have signed up will be encouraged to form additional groups. See Ginna for more information.

Reminder: Beginning in January, the afternoon **Women's Agape Group** will meet only once a month—on the fourth Tuesday. The time remains 1:30-3:00. The Agape group offers women a time drop in for sharing and discussion around topics that require no preparation.

Preschool Open House

Annandale Cooperative Preschool invites you to our open house on **Wednesday and Friday, January 14 and 16** at 9:30-11:30. Established in 1947, Annandale Co-op is a parent-run, developmentally oriented cooperative school for children ages 2-5. Classes meet from 9:00 to noon. Annandale Co-op is NAEYC accredited and Virginia state licensed, with degreed teachers. It offers creative movement, music, and science.

Annandale Co-op has met in our building since it opened in 1959. Children of Little River members and friends enjoy priority enrollment. To learn more, contact the preschool (703-978-6127, www.annandalecoop.org).

Open Mike Night

Have you ever wanted to be a star? To perform your comedy, dance, or performance art, or to sing your song backed by professional musicians in a nightclub before an adoring, applauding, hooting and hollering crowd? This is your chance! Open Mike Night will be held **Saturday, February 7** at Club Little River. All are welcome: youngest to oldest, soloists, families, groups.

Please contact Julie Holm by **Sunday, January 25** if you want to be part of the fun. And if you want to be backed by the band, please hand your sheet music to Julie Holm or Dave Shepherd by then.

Policy & Faith: Living Green

Melissa Melum from St. Paul's UCC in Westminster, Maryland will facilitate a discussion on an Exploration of Faith-Based Sustainable Living on **Sunday, January 18** at 11:00. Sustainable living refers to a personal commitment to engage in practices that tend to sustain the earth's resources. It involves a mindset, an awareness, a sense of personal caring, and commitment.

Discussion topics will include:

- Spirituality and Sustainable Lifestyle
- Pragmatism and Sustainable Lifestyle: What Difference Can My Lifestyle Choices Make?
- Options for Sustainable Living

All are invited to this important conversation in furtherance of Little River's "Thinking Green" initiative.

Conversations on Membership

If you are considering membership in the congregation of Little River UCC, you are invited to the Conversation on Membership to be held 3:00-4:30 on two consecutive Sundays: **January 18** (Session A) and **January 25** (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, February 8**. The next round of Conversation on Membership will be Wednesdays, April 29 and May 6, with new members received on Sunday, May 17.

To find out more, please speak to Verne or Ginna.

Place Setters

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

- Dinner for Eight, where 7-9 people gather in each other's homes sharing meals, usually as a potluck.;
- The Lunch Gathering, for people who have more free time during the day or may not like driving at night;
- The Brunch Bunch, which meets midday Sundays;
- The Mini Dinner Group, for those who want to meet only 2 or 3 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 in the atrium through **Sunday, January 25**. If you have any questions, please contact Jean Duggan.



Public Policy: A Talk on Race

During the **first three Sundays of February**, the Rev. Dr. Jacqueline Moncrief will lead the adult education class in discovering and exploring conscious and unconscious ways in which racism has affected our lives. Through special materials, film, and structured discussions, Rev. Moncrief will open us to whole new understandings of racism and ethnicity.

Jacque most recently served as a senior pastor of a United Church of Christ church in Northern California. She will draw upon her training in antiracism, social justice activism, and knowledge of liberation theology to facilitate the talk on race. Jacque currently serves as a Companion of the Community for Reconciliation at Washington National Cathedral.

This discussion series allows people to come together and speak openly and honestly about issues of race. The intent is that each person walks away from the discussion feeling challenged, enlightened, refreshed, reassured, and hopefully inspired to action!

The series will focus on the following topics:

Feb. 1 Racism: Exploring Our Beliefs About Race

Feb. 8 White Privilege: What It Is and How It Affects Us

Feb. 15 Multiracialism

The first two experientially based sessions are designed to foster a deeper appreciation of our differences and to help us share deep feelings about race and culture. The second session will focus specifically on the unearned advantages and disadvantages of white privilege.

For the third session, Elliott Lewis, a Washington area journalist and public speaker on multiracial identity and related issues, has been invited to discuss his latest book, *Fade: My Journeys in Multiracial America*.

If you are interested in attending one or more sessions of A Talk on Race, please pick up the series packet in the narthex. It contains a glossary of terms, questions for individual reflection, and guidelines for participation.

Anti-Torture Principles

At the **January 25** annual meeting, our congregation will decide whether to endorse 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, and Evangelicals for Human Rights. They have been endorsed by many dozens of individuals and groups, including UCC President John Thomas and our own Church Council.

The text of the Declaration will be posted at church before the annual meeting. It is on view at the National Religious Campaign's website (www.nrca.org; click on "Tell the President: Ban Torture!"). In short, the principles declare that:

- *We will not authorize or use any methods . . . we would not [accept] if used against Americans*
- *We will have one national standard . . . for the interrogation and treatment of prisoners*
- *We will acknowledge all prisoners to our courts or the International Red Cross.*
- *We will in no circumstance hold persons in secret prisons or engage in disappearances.*
- *Prisoners will have the opportunity to prove their innocence in ways that fully conform to American principles of fairness.*
- *We will not transfer any person to countries that use torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.*
- *Congress and the courts . . . will have access to the information they need to be fully informed*
- *All US officials who . . . fail in their duty to prevent the use of torture . . . will be held accountable*

Those who wish can also sign the on-line petition and endorse the Declaration as individuals.

Prayer Against Torture

The National Religious Campaign Against Torture is calling for ten days of prayer, leading up to the inauguration, that our country will renounce the use of torture. They encouraging us to pray this prayer **January 11-20**:

O God, you have created all people in your image, each one of us with dignity and worth, sacred in your sight. Help us this day and every day to hold that truth in our hearts and to honor it in all we do, treating every person as your beloved child.

We pray for the courage, as a nation, to confront the abuses authorized and committed in our name—the use of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment—in the effort to make us safe.

We grieve, knowing that inflicting injustice and cruelty on even one person scars and diminishes all of us. Our nation's use of torture has degraded victims, perpetrators, and policy makers, and has damaged the soul of our nation itself.

We rejoice in your healing and redemption and in your promise that that which is broken, you will make whole. May we faithfully participate in your repairing of the world.

We pray, Merciful God, that in the coming days, our government will end the use of torture and begin to heal our national soul. In these days before our new President takes office, we ask for your blessing on him and his staff. Give him the courage and wisdom to end the use of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment—without exceptions—and to lead us in restoring the goodness and integrity of our country.

And let us say: Amen.



Still Time to Join the Campaign!

Little River's stewardship pledge campaign for 2009 is wrapping up! To date, 298 people have responded with 190 pledges of financial support totaling \$653,000. Of these pledges, 44 percent increased and another 37 percent are maintained at the 2008 level. Pledges range from \$50 to \$20,000. What an amazing outpouring of support for our ministries! That's the good news.

The troubling news is that in 2008 our pledged income totaled \$692,400 from 204 pledges. Without the additional \$40,000 in pledged income for 2009, we will have a difficult time fulfilling our plans for the year.

If you have not made your pledge yet, please do so today by returning your pledge card or telephoning Jane Johnson in the church office.

Many folks have noted their intentions to increase their pledge as they are able in 2009. If you are in a position to increase your pledge now, please deliver a revised pledge card to the Stewardship mail slot or mail it to the Stewardship Committee, c/o Little River UCC.

Thank you.

Jan Curtis

Stewardship Committee

Being There for Wellspring

Most of you are aware that Wellspring UCC in Centreville grew out of Little River's western neighborhood. Folks in the Centreville area bemoaned the long drive to church (especially on weeknights!) and recognized the need for a progressive church in their community. That vision was fulfilled in 2000 when Wellspring formally became a UCC congregation, although the road has not been easy. Their core group now numbers about 20, and their part-time interim pastor is our own Al Fuentes.

The good folks at this small but dynamic congregation are requesting our help. They are asking if a handful of our people would worship with them at least two Sundays a month for the next six to twelve months. They sense that their small size may deter visitors from joining a group where they would be too visible.

This could be a rewarding ministry if you are interested in church growth and enjoy different forms of worship and congregational life. If you're willing to consider this possibility, speak to Verne or Ginna.

Currents Schedule

Starting with the next issue, *Currents* resumes its two-week schedule until mid-June. The schedule is always available at lrucc.org: click About Us > Church Publications: Newsletter > Schedule of deadlines.

<i>Deadline (Thu.)</i>	<i>Mailing (Tue.)</i>
January 22	January 27
February 5	February 10
February 19	February 24
March 5	March 10
March 19	March 24
April 2	April 7
April 16	April 21
April 30	May 5
May 14	May 19
May 28	June 2
June 11	June 16





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

*welcoming diversity, independent thought,
& faithful action*

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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; 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.