



Challenge as Privilege

This week I opened a newsletter with the title article facing me: From the Office of the President. While this president is facing economic stresses that seem unprecedented, war, and a challenge calling for new diplomacy and faith, it isn't President Obama. I am speaking of The Rev. Dr. Mary Mikael, President of the Near East School of Theology in Beirut.

Mary goes on to share news of the work of the seminary. A paragraph caught my eye: "N.E.S.T. has also trained a caravan of servants for the churches in Sudan, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Iran and Armenia. We praise God who gave us the privilege to do this great ministry."

Imagine thinking of work under such conditions as war, food shortages, gas shortages, shortages of electricity and security, as a privilege! She in no way discounts the challenge or idealizes the devastating conditions under which N.E.S.T. manages to offer ministry. But Dr. Mikael inspires her students and all of those who connect with her to see service to others as privilege because it brings us closer to the God who often seems remote and silent.

With the backdrop of war, N.E.S.T. continues to hold monthly public Christian-Muslim Thought Forums for the extended community.

Where is the privilege is our lives?

Peace,
Ginna

Peace Be with You

Beginning **Ash Wednesday, February 25**, I will begin our Peace Offering Vigil as in 2007.

There will be no lectures about what the meaning of peace is. (We're all still trying to figure that out anyway.) No finger pointing. Just a moment to offer the peace of Christ to those who pass our way after going through who-knows-what during the day!

You are welcome to join me on Little River Turnpike by our sign any time between 5:30 and 6:30 p.m. each day of Lent, weather permitting. If you need a chair, please let me know. Bundle up!

"Let peace begin with me. Let this be the moment now . . ."

Ginna

Public Policy & Faith: Safe Space

Little River's Safe Space Committee wants your input. For some time now, they have been working on a draft policy for our church focusing on abuse prevention—a step urged by the national UCC. Next month's Public Policy and Faith series is devoted to examining the issues, discussing the draft policy, and getting your reactions and ideas.

- **March 1:** Our own Rev. Anne Holmes, a member of the Potomac Association Church and Ministry Committee, will address the reasons churches are in the process of adopting Safe Church policies.
- **March 8:** Letha Dreyfus, chair of the Potomac Association Church and Ministry Committee, will share some of the issues other churches have encountered in this process.
- **March 15:** Little River's Safe Space Committee will share its thinking on a draft policy for our church. Guiding the discussion will be Dr. Martha Miller, a cross-cultural communications consultant for the Centers for Disease Control, the State Department, Citi, NASA and IBM.
- **March 22:** Dr. Miller and the committee look for your thoughts on a Safe Church policy and implementation.
- **March 29:** The committee will share results of your input and, with you, make suggestions for next steps.

All sessions start at 11:00. Join the Safe Space Committee for this important dialogue.

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Next deadline: Thu. February 19, 4:30
lrucc.org/Currents/Currents_Schedule.html

Welcome, New Members!

On February 8, Little River welcomed Peg Gianuca and Cathy Hunt into full membership. Congratulations!

“Creating Worship” Continues

Join the pastors and the Worship Committee for any or both of the remaining sessions exploring the whys and hows of worship and worship planning. On **Sunday, February 15** Ginna will help participants understand how the various ways we learn can be supported within the worship service. The following **Sunday, February 22**, participants will begin the process of planning and leading a future worship service.

Come to either or both, whether to be part of the leadership or just to deepen your understanding of this important part of our faith life together. Sessions will meet around 12:15 to 1:30, starting with a hot lunch.

Please sign up in advance at the Worship Committee's table in the narthex.

Talking About Race: Multiracial

At 11:00 on **Sunday, February 15**, the last of Public Policy and Faith's Talk on Race series hosts Elliott Lewis, a freelance television journalist and author of *Fade: My Journeys in Multiracial America*. Mr. Lewis will discuss shifting attitudes toward biracial identity in the United States, from the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and '60s to the emergence of Barack Obama in the 21st century.

Fade weaves Lewis's own story as a black-and-white biracial American with the voices of dozens of other multiracial people, illuminating a wide range of racial experiences and identity strategies. The Washington Post praised the book as “a much-needed clarification of America's new racial reality.” It will be available for purchase (\$15) and signing after the talk.

First Friday: Happy Seuss-day!

From there to here, from here to there, funny things are everywhere! Thing 1 and Thing 2 request your presence at a Dr. Seuss birthday extravaganza **Friday March 6** at 6:30 p.m. Bring friends! Come dressed as your favorite character—and maybe win a prize! You'll get to be part of some of your favorite Dr. Seuss stories for a night. Can you guess what color supper will be?

As always, First Friday provides good fun, a nutritious meal, and a caring environment for children six months through sixth grade while parents get time to themselves. First Friday is open to all, both in and outside our church family.

Register online at www.lrucc.org: click on Our Life Together > Fellowship > First Friday and follow the link

to the registration page. Or for more information contact Lorri (703-953-8270, [firstfriday \[at\] lrucc \[.\] org](mailto:firstfriday@lrucc.org)).

Women's Book Group

The Story of Edgar Sawtelle, by David Wroblewski, is the topic of the next book group discussion scheduled for **Sunday, March 15**. It is a compelling read about a mute boy, his family, and their business raising and training a fictional breed of dogs in the backwoods of Wisconsin. After an uncle reappears and Edgar's father dies, the story becomes a classic coming-of-age saga with an ironic twist.

The book is on the best seller list and only available in hard cover. Costco has had copies for just a bit more than a paperback. The Fairfax County Libraries have many copies. It looks as though the wait may not be too long at some branches.

Women's Cathedral Trip in May

Save the date! On **Saturday, May 16**, Little River Women are invited to attend a day-long pilgrimage at historic Washington National Cathedral. Our leader will be our own Kathy Spaar, who is a pilgrimage leader there. Details will follow in a future *Currents*.

Correction to Roster of Leaders

Nominations & Appointments Committee

2011: Joe Christiansen (1) and two vacancies



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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& faithful action*

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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.