



Toward a Healing Community

Haven't we all experienced the phenomenon that when we admit to having a problem, a medical condition, or something out of the ordinary (and usually negative), we're amazed to learn we have more company than we thought? We learn we're not the only ones to have depression, AIDS, a difficult child, or a marriage on the rocks. We learn that other people have a drinking problem, or lost their job, or have a loved one who is incarcerated. It is this last situation—people affected by crime, incarceration and reintegration—that is the scope of Healing Communities, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation (www.aecf.org; enter "healing communities and toolkits" in the search box).

Congregations within the Potomac Association are being asked to participate in the training and mutual support afforded by become a Healing Community. "Not an issue for us!" you may be saying to yourself? Careful! Even with the kind of shame which can come from having a loved one involved in the legal system (especially here in Fairfax County where everyone is "doing just fine, thank you"—ha!), I am aware of folks for whom this is a stark reality. As a faith community, do we not owe such folks—victims, perpetrators, and their loved ones—the support they need, including the

freedom to be open about their situation?

If the possibility of making Little River UCC a Healing Community is something that interests you, or something we need, please speak to me or Ginna.

Verne

Ash Wednesday Worship

All are invited to enter the season of Lent by participating in the Ash Wednesday evening communion service **Wednesday, February 25**, at 7:30 in our sanctuary.

Rebirth for Dinner Program

Please join the Dinner Program for Homeless Women **Friday, February 27** from 6:30 to 9:00 at the True Reformer Building, 1200 U Street NW, for "Evolution: New Perspectives on the Homeless," as we unveil our new name and highlight the lives of the men and women we serve.

During this evening we will adjust the lens on our homeless neighbors to bring into focus their everyday struggles and challenges in our city. Don't miss this chance to bring your friends and share with those new to DPHW's work an eye-opening evening of art, music, food, and drink. At "Evolution," DPHW will reveal its new name and image, which captures the heart of DPHW today and its vision for the future.

RSVP to Elizabeth Evancho at 202-737-9311 x526 to purchase a ticket at \$35, or buy a ticket at the door or at www.dphw.org for \$40. Don't miss it!

Goodbye and Thanks, Sylvia

For over fifteen years, Sylvia Koch has served as our assistant secretary, averaging 1½ days per week and covering for Jane's vacations. She has performed this job well, cheerfully, and with great diligence. While Sylvia has submitted her resignation effective February 28, she has graciously offered to volunteer additional time until other coverage can be provided.

On **Sunday, March 1** at the 10:30-11:00 coffee hour we will honor Sylvia with a cake as we thank her for her fifteen years of service. Please join us.

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Next deadline: Thu. March 5, 4:30

lruc.org/Currents/Currents_Schedule.html

Meet Our Newest Members

On February 8, Little River UCC welcomed two new members, Cathy Hunt and Peg Gianucca. Pick up a printed copy of *Currents* for introductions.

At the next opportunity please greet our newest members, introduce yourself and extend a warm welcome to Cathy, Peg and their families.

Opportunities Calendar

The March-May Education and Enrichment Opportunities calendar is available in the literature racks in the Atrium and Narthex. Please pick up as many copies as you—and your neighbors!—need.

Lenten Series

Songs in the Desert: When God Seems Absent is the title of this year's Lenten Series, to be held from 7:30-8:45 p.m. on the **first four Tuesdays of March**. Led by Little River's Mary Morreale, a music therapist and minister of music, this series will explore times in our lives when God seems absent, while opening us to the transforming renewal of God's grace. A simple supper of homemade soup and bread will precede each session at 6:45. The schedule is:

- **March 3:** Music and Spirituality
- **March 10:** Seeking Psalms and Songs
- **March 17:** Lenten Hymns
- **March 24:** Music & Creative Journey

Public Policy & Faith: Safe Space

During March, Public Policy and Faith will host a series devoted to examining the issues, discussing the draft policy, and getting your reactions and ideas as our congregation prepares to adopt a Safe Church policy as stipulated by the UCC.

- **March 1:** Why we need an updated Safe Space Policy (Rev. Anne Holmes, Potomac Association Church & Ministry Committee)
- **March 8:** What other churches have experienced with Safe Space policies (Ms. Letha Dreyfus, Chair, Potomac Assn Church and Ministry Committee)
- **March 15:** Safe Space draft policy and interim policy statement (Safe Space Committee and Dr. Martha Miller, communications consultant)
- **March 22:** Small-group discussions (Dr. Miller and the committee)
- **March 29:** Next steps

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

Women in Theology Today

On the **first Wednesdays of March, April, and May** at 7:30 you are invited to join in discussing the thinking of women theologians. The following will be our plan:

- **March 4:** *Proverbs of Ashes* by Rita Nakahima Brock
- **April 1:** *Struggle to be the Sun Again* by Chung Hyun Kyung
- **May 6:** *Setting the Table: Women in Theological Conversation*

Please contact Ginna if you wish to sign up. No preparatory reading is required, though you may find it enriching to read the books at your convenience.

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 details contact Lorri ([firstfriday \[at\] lrucc \[dot\] org](mailto:firstfriday@lrucc.org)).

Women's Book Group

Join the Women's Book Group on **Sunday, March 15** at 12:15 p.m. to discuss *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle* by David Wroblewski. In this classic coming-of-age story, Edgar, a mute, is growing up in the backwoods of northern Wisconsin. His family has for generations bred, raised and trained a fictional breed of dogs. After an uncle reappears and Edgar's father dies, Edgar's life is changed forever.

Fairfax County Libraries have many copies of the book, with holds on some copies. It is only available in hardback, but Costco has had copies available for just a little more than a paperback.

Anti-Torture Events

The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT), of which Little River UCC is now a member, invites you to participate in the following March events.

Saturday, March 14: workshop at Ecumenical Advocacy Days, 4:30-6:00 at the Hilton Mark Center Hotel in Alexandria. NRCAT is hosting a workshop entitled "Next Steps in Ending US-Sponsored Torture." All are welcome, and you may attend the workshop without being registered to attend Ecumenical Advocacy Days. Speakers include George Hunsinger, founder of NRCAT and professor of theology at the Princeton Theological Seminary; Scott Horton, legal affairs and national security contributor to Harper's and adjunct professor at Columbia University Law School; and Matthew Alexander, former US military interrogator and author of *How to Break a Terrorist: The U.S. Interrogators Who Used Brains, Not Brutality, to Take Down the Deadliest Man in Iraq*. For more information, see Gay Gardner or contact NRCAT (202-547-1920, www.nrcat.org).

Thursday, March 19: conference "Torture, Conscience, and the Catholic Moral Tradition" at Catholic University, 1:00-7:00. It will take place in the Moot Courtroom in the Columbus School of Law, Catholic University, 3600 McCormack Rd. NE, Washington. Distinguished speakers include General Anthony Taguba, the chief investigator of abuses at Abu Ghraib, as well as Catholic theologians, the director of a well-known torture treatment facility, and a former US army interrogator. you may attend any or all of the conference sessions:

- 1:15-3:15: torture and Catholic social teaching
- 3:30-5:30: peacebuilding and torture
- 6:00-7:00: accountability in the use of torture
- 7:00: dinner (\$20)

Except for the dinner, the conference is free. Find out more at www.nrcat.org.

Lenten Ember Evening

All members and friends of Little River are invited to join in a Lenten "Ember Evening" contemplative experience **Wednesday, March 18**. From 7:30 to 8:30 a service of worship will offer quiet prayer, poetry, scripture, and sharing (if you desire) framed by soft music and candlelight. Please join us for an evening of spiritual renewal, presented by Women's Ministries.

A Mission Accomplished

On Sunday, February 15 the moderator of the UCC of Fredericksburg, Mr. Dennis Parsons, joined us for worship at 11:00, where he returned the small cross made in 1993 by Charlie Schafer. The cross once again resides in its intended location on the organ pipe case,

where it provides a Christian symbol to those who lead worship.

Little River loaned the cross to the Fredericksburg new church start in August of 2003, when they were worshiping in a coffee house. The fledgling congregation welcomed this gesture from its sponsoring church and gratefully used it for over five years. When the congregation was formally received as a UCC church last January, the Rev. Rob Peters of our congregation presented our friends in Spotsylvania County with their own cross, which Rob skillfully and lovingly made.

Bowl of Caring: Souper Indeed!

The Junior Pilgrim Fellowship, with generous contributions from the Little River UCC community, raised \$462 during the Souper Bowl of Caring on February 1 and 8. The Souper Bowl of Caring is a program that builds on the excitement surrounding the Super Bowl season to mobilize youth to fight hunger and poverty in their local communities.

Many of you emptied your pockets of change (and your billfold of bills) into two large soup pots, one marked "Steelers" and the other marked "Cardinals," and for that the Junior PF thanks you. Contribution to the Steelers' pot were \$240 and to the Cardinals' \$222. While we did not change the outcome of the Super Bowl, with your help we did help fight hunger in our own neighborhoods. All we collected has been sent to Food for Others in Fairfax.

Eric Pankey

The Rising: Lenten Conversation

The Rising, our new Lenten reflection and conversation, is a spiritual reflection and conversation group with a twist: instead of making you come out to church one more night in your cars, we bring the conversation group to you, in an online chat room.

Mondays at 8:00 p.m. from March 2, the first Monday of Lent, to June 1, the Monday after Pentecost, we'll discuss the book *The Rising* by Wendy M. Wright. We'll spend an hour to an hour and a half online discussing between 6 and 12 pages of the book each week.

You'll need a computer with an internet connection and browser, a copy of the book, and an interest in exploring the richness of the Lent-Easter-Pentecost season and the spiritual themes that come to the surface during these days.

To participate, contact Julie Holm ([jholm \[at\] dragonholm \[dot\] org](mailto:jholm@dragonholm.org)) or [therising \[at\] lrucc \[dot\] org](mailto:therising@lrucc.org)). If you've never tried a chat room, don't worry; we'll help you get set up and become part of the group!



Greenspring Conversations

On February 11 Ginna and Verne held a spirited conversation with seventeen of the twenty-eight Little River folks who live at Greenspring Village. Our pastors presented an in-depth look at some of the issues and initiatives in our congregation while also hearing from them. Monthly hour-long conversations are planned, led alterately by Ginna and Verne.

Good News; Call to Go Green

Members and friends of Little River continue to offer pledge increases—many in the expectation that before the year is over we can address some of the necessary but unfortunate budget cuts enacted at the annual meeting in January. At this writing 24 “pledging units”—families and individuals—have pledged increases totaling \$17,500, and an additional seven “units” have offered new/renewed pledges for a grand total of \$24,760 received since the January letter was mailed. Of this amount, \$12,990 is “sitting” in Major Repair Reserves as a holding spot; the remainder is included in the approved operating budget. (To alter your pledge, call Jan Curtis at 703-503-8454. To make a pledge, use the form included in the stewardship brochure located in the literature racks.)

More good news: 23 percent of the church’s 199 pledges are fulfilled by electronic transfer of funds (EFT), rather than by check. Thank you to all who have chosen to make your pledge in this way, as this predictable source of revenue provides a stable monthly income base, and it helps Little River to “go green” with the reduction of paper envelopes and checks.

Electronic transfer of funds allows payments to be made directly from your financial institution to the church account electronically, on a specified date of each month. It is easy to change the pledge amount or date of transfer. Worshipers who participate in EFT are encouraged to place the cards located in the pew racks in the offering plate as a symbolic representation of their giving. If you would like to “go green” with EFT, please contact a member of the Stewardship Committee for more information or complete the form printed in the stewardship brochure.

Jan Curtis

Chair, Stewardship Committee

Thanks for White Gifts

Thank you so much for all your Christmas presents!! Darin loves them all and you made his day!! He kept saying that “How Santa knew what I like the most? They are all my favorites.”

— Let me tell you a story. Darin has a Geotrex train set several years ago and we set it up for him and his brother every year, and this year, the motor was kind of

not working very well, but they managed to make it work eventually. Surprisingly, he got another set of trains that has the same brand as the old one and he was so surprised, he said to me, “Mom, how Santa knew my old train almost broke and gave me a new one?” And most of all, since they are the same brand, he can combine all the cargos from both trains. It is amazing!!

We want to thank you for the present you have sent to my daughter Michelle for Christmas. We really appreciate it.

. . . Many times over, preparing for this holiday, we were reminded of the goodness within this community. Families, individuals, area businesses and civic workers reached out to our children, their families and our programs. Financial donations and in-kind contributions help the Main Street CDC maintain a high-quality, consistent sustainable childcare and stronger “working” families.

Thanks for brightening others’ lives in so many meaningful ways. Please accept our gratitude for adding sunshine to all our days! . . .

Fondly,

Elizabeth Egan

Executive Director

Main Street Child Development Center



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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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.