

eCURRENTS

LITTLE RIVER UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Editor: H.E. Beckwith

The Shape of Sundays to Come

It's one of those conversations we need to have (and do have!) about once every five years: Should we change our Sunday morning schedule, and if so, what should it look like?! Perhaps you missed them, but we recently held such conversations—and the results are in.

It's official: the Church Council decided April 22 that our Sunday morning schedule shall (for the foreseeable future) remain pretty much as it is now, with worship and church school for children at 9:30 and worship and adult education at 11:00.

What's different? Starting in September we're going to have Everyone in Worship (adults and children together in the sanctuary, and no church school) at the 9:30 hour on the first Sunday of every month when we also have communion; choral music will be provided by the Joyful Noise and/or Salt of the Earth Choirs. At 11:00 on the first Sunday of the month, the Sanctuary Choir usually will sing.

The other three or four Sundays of the month the Sanctuary Choir usually will sing at 9:30, and music at the second service will be supplied by one or more of the remaining three choirs (Salt of the Earth, Joyful Noise, or Contemporary). Adult education will occur at the 11:00 hour except for the first Sunday of the month. As usual, infant and toddler care will be available at both hours every Sunday.

Whenever a change like this is made, some will be

inconvenienced and some (hopefully more) will find they benefit. When these changes are implemented in the fall, your pastors and the church council will want your feedback. This decision is not cast in stone, but is open to adjustment as needed. Thanks to all those who provided input for this latest decision in our life together.

Verne

Congratulations, Confirmands!

On May 3 Little River welcomed eight young people into full membership after a course of study and preparation. Congratulations! Read all about them in our hall display and see the Directory Updates in the printed edition of *Currents*.

Call for Special Meeting

A Special Meeting of the Congregation of Little River United Church of Christ is called for **Sunday, May 17** at 12:15 p.m. The purpose of the meeting is to approve the hiring of a part-time Pastor for Youth Ministry, to add a line item to the budget for this position, and to modify the terms of call of Ginna Minasian Dalton, Pastor for Christian Education, Youth, and Evangelism.

Brian Payne
Clerk

Policy & Faith: Creation Care

In the beginning, God made creation and it was good. But what has happened since then? On **Sunday, May 10** at 11:00, join our own Sarah Wyatt, a biologist with Conservation International, as she talks about what the Bible says about nature and the current status of life on Earth. She will focus on the current science of conservation and prospects for the future. With much conservation effort focused on rain forests and coral reefs in developing countries, she will also address how conservation is vital to development and alleviating poverty.

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Next deadline: Thu. May 14, 4:30

lrucc.org/Currents/Currents_Schedule.html

“How Can We Thank Them?”

“Who are the cookers?”

“They aren’t here.”

“But then how can we thank them?”

The Welcome Center students certainly enjoyed the wonderful food prepared for them and the Young Adults to savor by some of the generous “cookers” of our congregation. They were surprised to find out that they could not thank you personally. So here I pass along their thank yous.

We close out the spring semester on **Thursday, May 7** from 4:00 to 7:00. Perhaps some of you could join us to chat with the students who enjoyed your special dishes.

Support for Angelman Walk

Sunday, May 10 is the last day that the youth of Little River will have a table set up so you may make a donation in support of the Angelman Syndrome Foundation’s National Walk-A-Thon on **Saturday, May 16**. Please make checks payable to the Angelman Syndrome Foundation. Tommy R. is Little River’s special inspiration for participating in this walk.

Please stop by after either service and show your support for Tommy and the PF endeavor to be part of Tommy’s Team for the Washington area walk in Columbia, Maryland. Walkers will depart from Little River at 8:30 that morning and return around 3:00.

Find out more about this event at the Angelman Syndrome Foundation website (www.angelman.org).

Adventures in India

By remarkable coincidence, several members of our congregation have ties to boarding schools in India. On **Sunday, May 17**, join Owen Thomas and Kenyon Erickson from 11:00-noon as they lead a short discussion about these schools, illustrated with a 30-minute video and slideshow. Come learn about a multi-cultural educational experience of a lifetime.

Woodstock School (www.woodstock.ac.in, www.sageprogram.org) is perched in the foothills of the Himalayas with spectacular views of the Indian plains and snows of the highest peaks in the world. Kodaikanal International School (www.kis.in) is located 7,000 feet above sea level in some of the world’s oldest mountains in south India. Both schools offer programs one semester or longer studying in this unique environment. In addition to K through 12 and International Baccalaureate programs, both schools also offer the Studies Abroad for a Global Education (SAGE) Program which provides grants for a semester or a year study in 11th or 12th grade or a “bridge year” between high school and college. And for teachers in search of adventure, these schools offer job opportunities as well.

If anyone you know might enjoy this presentation, or benefit from a semester or year (or more) in India, RSVP to Kenyon ([keeperken\[at\]aol\[dot\]com](mailto:keeperken[at]aol[dot]com)).

Honoring Our Graduates

May 31 is the Sunday we will honor members of our church family who have graduated anytime since last spring from high school, college, or technical or graduate school. If that describes you or a family member, please notify the church office in writing by **Monday, May 18** if possible. Include the graduate’s name, school and degree, relationship (if not a Little River family member) and, for high school graduates, where they will continue their education, if applicable.

Also, please let the office know about any address changes for graduates listed in the church directory.

Send a Child to Camp

If you would like to enhance the summer for an inner-city child, please consider sponsoring a Shaw Community child (from the low income-area around 7th and R Streets NW in Washington) for an expanded experience of hiking in the woods, refreshing swimming and developing friendships with children from the entire metropolitan area. The cost of sending a child for the two-week experience at Camp Letts is \$1,200. Funding is also needed for special day trips for the local Shaw Day Camp, called Camp Friendship.

If you would like to contribute any amount towards a student’s camp experience, please make your check payable to Shaw Community Ministry with memo “summer camp.” Shaw must receive financial gifts by Monday, June 15. Please give your check to the church office or the special collection **Sunday, May 31**. Little River has been very supportive of the Shaw Summer Camp experience in the past and that generosity is greatly appreciated.

Post-Pentecost Picnic

Come one, come all! On **Sunday, June 7** we will celebrate the beginning of the summer season and the birth of the church with our annual Post-Pentecost Picnic. Following the 9:30 service, all members and friends are invited to gather for a potluck lunch. Bring your favorite salad, dessert or side dish. The Board of Deacons will provide hot dogs, hamburgers and beverages. Don’t miss this great event! Questions? Contact Cici Thompson ([cicithom\[at\]aol\[dot\]com](mailto:cicithom[at]aol[dot]com)).



Changes for Youth Pastorate

From a letter to the congregation from the Pastoral Relations Committee:

A few months ago we received with gladness the extension of Verne and Ginna's ministry with us. The Pastoral Relations Committee has been working with both pastors to ensure that their additional time with us is fruitful for all concerned. As a result of our discussions it has become apparent that the needs of our youth have expanded remarkably over recent years. The time, energy and physical demands required to minister to youth and manage youth groups are great. Ginna has come to realize that she is no longer able to meet the growing demands of youth ministry, and this was a large part of her decision to resign last summer when Verne announced his retirement. After accepting the congregation's offer to stay on with Little River UCC, Ginna and the Pastoral Relations Committee have had several discussions concerning her responsibilities.

At the same time, the commitment to caring for our congregation and initiating new programs has grown tremendously over the last few years. In order to offset the additional hours required by pastoral care, and to focus on the support of our youth, we believe it would be prudent to modify Ginna's job description to allow her to spend more of her time caring for members in need and developing programs. This would be in addition to the focused time she spends with Christian education, evangelism, fellowship and the countless other activities that she has undertaken to promote the vitality of our church.

After lengthy discussions with Verne and Ginna, it has been determined that the best solution is to hire a part time youth pastor for the youth groups as well as ages 11-18 in church school. The Board of Deacons will therefore recommend to the Congregation that this portion of Ginna's position be led by someone who is dedicated primarily to youth ministry. This would be a part-time position. We would focus on finding someone who has experience with youth, has seminary training, and shares a focus of taking the Christian life of our youth beyond the "Sunday evening experience." The optimum time for such a pastor to start in such a position would be at the beginning of the summer. We would expect that this youth pastor would remain in that role until the pastoral transition we are anticipating in 2011.

This action obviously would have budget implications. We recall that we had to make some hard budget decisions for 2009 leading up to and during the Annual Meeting. Such a position will require additional funding. Fortunately, the response to the Stewardship Committee's request for us to consider an increase in our financial commitment to Little River UCC has been gratifying. To date, our pledges have surpassed the amount assumed during the final preparation of the 2009 budget.

At their April 22, 2009 meeting, the Church Council voted to call a special Congregational meeting for Sunday, May 17, 2009 to request approval to proceed to

hire a part-time youth pastor and to make the necessary changes to the pastoral calls and the 2009 budget.

Because the time is short, the Pastoral Relations Committee and the Youth Committee of the Board of Christian Education are developing a suitable job description and begin the search for a youth pastor with the hope of securing someone by mid to late June. Completion of this process obviously depends on Congregational approval at the special meeting being called for May 17. If you have questions please contact Cici Thompson, Noreen Bania or Barbara Lowrey.

Sharing Stories: Godly Play

Christian Education is pleased that Natalie Stapert has agreed to be the lead team member for Godly Play, our new storytelling approach for young children.

We are looking for more storytellers to join Natalie in sharing their voices and time with our three- to five-year-olds. They will work in teams of two sharing Bible stories with the children, one team each semester. While it is simple—just telling the story, no complicated activities—it does require spending time with each week's Bible story, learning it for the meaning you get from it, and spending the church-school hour sharing it with children as they listen and play with characters and toys to reenact the story.

It's an opportunity to enrich your own spiritual life as well, as you explore wonderful Bible stories that may be familiar, unknown, or even strange to you.

Christian Education will develop support for you too: there will be group sessions for practice and help, plus a field trip to a church that uses this approach.

Please consider joining this exciting and promising adventure to engage with children in wonder! Contact Mike Craven (*michael_d_craven [at] msn [dot] com*) or Ginna.

Un-Rending the Temple Curtain!

Our Lenten cloth that we drape over the cross is in need of repair. Edges need hemming and a few seams need resewing. After the repair it would be good to clean and press it too, so it will be ready for next year. If you are willing to dive into this project, please contact Ginna. Thank you..



Wanted: Ushers . . .

Ushers are needed in May at both services. Our smallest usher team has five Sundays to cover. If you can assist at either service any Sunday in May, please contact Mike Craven (9:30) or Julie Holm (11:00).

. . . And Travel Advisers

Male travel advisers are needed for three youth experiences this summer.

- **June 27-July 2:** Y-GELI 2 to the coal mines of Virginia and up the East Coast
- **July 16-19:** Y-GELI 1 Making the Invisible Visible in our two Capitols: Washington and Richmond
- **July 24-26:** Central Atlantic Conference Youth Event at Stevenson University in Baltimore

Our interim Safe Space policy applies; all travel advisers are required to sign Safe Space forms. Please contact Ginna as soon as possible.

First-Quarter Financial Report

The following is a first quarter financial update for Little River UCC:

Operating Fund

Operating fund pledge Income including prepaid pledges of \$44,000	\$174,590.00
All other operating income	\$8,240.44
Total Income	\$182,830.44
Year-to-date operating expenses	\$155,394.16
Net cash flow	\$27,436.28

Building fund

Year to date pledge income	\$17,594.22
Year-to-date expenses	\$20,647.26
Net cash flow	\$(3,053.04)

There is a definite cyclical nature to both pledge receipts and expenses. The first quarter net positive cash flow is largely influenced by the prepaid pledges made in 2008 for the 2009 budget. We are, however, off to a good start for 2009.

If you have any questions about either receipts or expenses, you may contact Chris Weakley, chair of Trustees, or Owen Thomas, Treasurer.





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*

Phone: 703-978-3060
Fax: 703-978-3372
E-mail: office [at] lrucc [dot] org

www.lrucc.org

Senior Pastor

The Rev. Verne E. Arens
Verne [at] lrucc [dot] org

Associate Pastor for Christian Education, Youth, and Evangelism

The Rev. Ginna Minasian Dalton
ginna [at] lrucc [dot] org

Minister for Community Relations

The Rev. James M. Bell
jim [at] lrucc [dot] org



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