

eCURRENTS

LITTLE RIVER UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Volume 56 Number 14

August 24, 2009

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The Pause Before the Plunge

I'm clinging to summer with my fingernails. Yes it's nasty hot and the humidity is even worse, but I'm still trying to wring everything out of summer I can get. This Clergy Column is supposed to be along the lines of "Oh How I'm Looking Forward to Fall," yet here I am hanging on, savoring the good moments, while trying to figure out where it all went. An August birthday reminds me I'm getting older which means time goes even faster, so maybe this is all about aging. I don't think so. I think I'm experiencing little more than the human condition: the desire to hang on to what is familiar and good rather than leaping into the unknown of the future.

Be assured, when we resume our fall schedule September 13, I'll be ready. After all, I'm a firm believer in founder John Robinson's adage that there is yet more truth and light to break forth from God's holy Word. More truth and light for Little River UCC—and more surprises (okay, challenges too!).

One of the messages we take from Easter is that God always is going before us revealing new opportunities. Join me?

Verne

New Season, New Starts

- **Worship at 9:30 & 11:00** resumes September 13.
- **Church school** also starts September 13 at 9:30, with registration 8:50-9:20. The "Our Whole Lives" class for ages 13 and up starts with a parents' orientation on Sunday, September 13 at 9:30. See "Our Whole Lives," page 2.
- The adult **Public Policy and Faith** class starts Sunday, September 20 at 11:00. It will alternate with occasional sessions on **Christianity in Mexico** presented by the Footsteps VIII travel group. See the article on page 3.
- **Choirs:** Sanctuary Choir starts Thursday, September 10 at 7:30. Contemporary Choir starts Sunday, September 6 at 12:15, and choirs for children and older youth begin Sunday the 20th and Saturday the 12th respectively. See "Get with the Beat," page 2.
- **Confirmation class** introduction for parents takes place Sunday September 27; class starts in October.
- **Pilgrim Fellowship youth groups** will announce their plans soon.
- **Office hours** of 9:00-4:30 are now in effect.
- **Currents'** biweekly schedule resumes with the next deadline, Thursday, September 10. See the box on this page for a link to the complete schedule.

What's Current...

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Young Adults Update | 2 |
| Get with the Beat | 2 |
| Place Setters | 2 |
| "Our Whole Lives" Orientation | 2 |
| Our Mission, Our Future | 2 |
| Elder Car Support Group | 3 |
| Christianity in Mexico | 3 |
| Women's Book Group | 3 |
| New Plan for Caring Hands | 3 |
| Little River Matters! Consider... | 3 |
| Social Action Double-Header | 4 |
| Youth Rep on UCC Council | 4 |
| Help Host Coffee Hour | 4 |
| Baltimore Oktoberfest & Art Fair | 4 |
| Reclaim Your Coffee Mugs | 4 |
| Links: Events, People, News | <i>back page</i> |
| Calendar | <i>lrucc.org > fast links</i> |

Next deadline: Thu. Sept. 10, 4:30

lrucc.org/Currents/Currents_Schedule.html

FISH Pantry Needs Food

Hard times have depleted the pantry we keep for Fairfax FISH. Especially needed are canned vegetables, rice, oatmeal, grits, canned entrees (meat, beans, pasta), tuna, soup, crackers, gelatin, and pudding. Please bring your donations anytime, not just communion Sundays.

Welcome Karen Wolfberg!

On July 6 we welcomed Karen Wolfberg to our office staff. As our new Assistant Secretary, Karen works Mondays and generally every other Tuesday (when a newsletter is being produced). She also will substitute for Jane Johnson when Jane is on vacation.

Karen and her husband live in Vienna; they have three grown children. A native of Ohio and a Navy veteran, Karen has held several administrative assistant positions in Northern Virginia.

Young Adults Update

Take me out to the ball game—for free—along with folks from our Welcome Center! On **Sunday, August 30**, meet at church at 11:45 (after the celebration for Jim Bell) to carpool to Camden Yards in Baltimore. Be sure to sign up first with Ginna or Lois Wyatt (*loisesl [at] verizon [dot] net*) by **Thursday, August 27**.

Take me to Vienna, too—as the young adults of Little River, First Baptist of Herndon, and Vienna Baptist churches start their new season. On **Tuesday, August 25** at 7:00, it's a cookout at the home of the Johnsons in Vienna. Dinner and Bible study are also scheduled at the Johnsons' on **Tuesdays, September 8 and 22** at 7:00. And don't miss the annual outing at Lost River Retreat Center in West Virginia **Friday-Sunday, October 2-4**.

For more information on any of these events, contact Ginna. And bring a friend—or two!

Get with the Beat

Joyful Noise: Are you in grade 6-12? Do you often find yourself playing Rock Band or Guitar Hero? Do you need something to do 11:00-12:00 on Sundays? Look no further! If you caught our sermon-concert in June, you know we sing great music. We rehearse two to three Sundays a month at 11:00 and sing in worship once or twice month, usually at 11:00. Don't miss our kickoff brunch rehearsal **Saturday September 12!**

Contemporary Choir: Love to sing? We invite the young at heart of any age to join the Contemporary Choir. Make beautiful harmonies and have a lot of fun. The music's good but not too difficult—perfect for divas and shower singers alike. Use your God-given pipes for God! We sing about twice a month and rehearse two Sundays a month from 12:15-1:30, starting **September 6**. Sopranos are especially welcome!

Curious about either choir? Contact Nancy Huddlestone (*nancyhuddlestone [at] verizon [dot] net*) today!

Salt of the Earth: Our choir for grades 1-5 meets Sundays at 11:00, starting **September 20**, and sings in church about twice a month. Can't resist? Contact Kenyon Erickson (*keeperken [at] aol [dot] com*).

Sanctuary Choir: The Sanctuary Choir welcomes singers both new and returning. Practice is every Thursday at 7:30 starting **September 10**. The choir sings most Sundays at one of the two services. The director is Craig Stapert (*craig [at] lruc [dot] org*).

Place Setters

It's sign up time again! In case you don't know, Place Setters is our opportunity for individuals, couples, or families to share several no-stress, low-work, companionable meals over a four-month period. It's a great way to get to know other church members better.

Place Setters is an outgrowth of the old Dinner for Eight program. There, participants were grouped into parties of about eight, and the members took turns hosting a dinner each month. The hosts made a main dish and the others brought the rest of the meal.

But we found that some groups can't really commit to four meals. Some like to meet for dinner, while others prefer Sunday brunch. Some people like to bring their young children with them. And some can't entertain in their homes.

So Place Setters makes sure there's a group for everyone! Just sign up in the narthex any Sunday through **September 6** and indicate your preferences for the September-December round. If you haven't done this in a while, now is a good time to try again.

Questions? Please contact Kathleen Styles (*kmstyles [at] cox [dot] net*).

“Our Whole Lives” Orientation

A parents' orientation session for the Our Whole Lives (OWL) Sexuality & Faith Curriculum will be held **Sunday, September 13** from 9:30-10:30. OWL is for students age 13 or older. A video will be shown to the youth in the choir room while parents attend the meeting. Please contact Darlene (*darlene [at] lruc [dot] org*) no later than **Wednesday, September 9** if you plan to attend.

Our Mission, Our Future

God is still speaking—and so are you!

Our congregation's Planning Committee has been hard at work since we were commissioned last December. Now we want to speak with you!

As a committee, we are considering three important questions that will determine where Little River is headed in the future. These questions are:

1. Who are we?
2. What has God called us to do?
3. Who is our neighbor?

To best answer these questions, we are looking to talk to you, the members and friends of our church. We will hold two events in September to start a conversation with you about where you see our congregation going.

- On **Sunday, September 20** we will host a Public Policy and Faith class at 11:00 to consider “Who is our neighbor?” We will discuss Little River's relation with our neighbors in the metropolitan area and the world around us.
- On **Sunday, September 27** join us at noon for lunch and conversation. We will provide lunch and talk with you about why Little River is important to you and where you see us going in the future.

We hope to see you at both events.

Claire Peterson
Planning Committee



Elder Care Support Group

Have you been wondering when the dynamic, resourceful, and caring Elder Care Support Group is meeting next? After a summer break, it will resume soon after a summer break. The final two meetings will take place **Sunday, September 20** and Sunday, October 18 from 12:15-1:30.

If you've been meaning to come but haven't made it yet, now is your chance! Feel free to bring a snack. Please contact leader Teresa C. Dunbar, MS (*tlcd3 [at] cox [dot] net*) with any questions.

Christianity in Mexico

Classes for all: This fall brings the first five in a series of educational presentations inspired by the planned Footsteps trip to Mexico next April. Whether you plan to travel with Footsteps or simply want to learn more about our neighbor to the south, you are welcome to attend any or all Sundays. All sessions start at 11:00.

September 27: A European context for the exploration and conquest of Mexico. *Kent Rogers*

October 11: A Mexican context for the conquest: religion and culture of the indigenous peoples. *Mary Weaver*

November 8: The Spanish conquest of Mexico: Aztecs vs. Hernán Cortés. *Brian Payne*

November 15: Spanish colonial history, the early republic, and the Mexican war. (90 minutes) *Gary Allen*

November 22: The French intervention through the Mexican revolution. *Bob Lingo*

Travel signup: Please pick up a copy of the brochure for "Christianity in Mexico: Legacy of the Cross and the Sword" from the table in the atrium or the literature rack in the narthex. All are invited to join us April 7-21, 2010, as we explore central Mexico, where Christianity first came to North America. The cost is a very reasonable \$1,890 per person, plus airfare to Mexico City (\$400-500). Signups will begin **Monday, September 14** at 9:00 am in the church office for a registration fee of \$100, or mail your check payable to LRUCC with Footsteps VIII on the memo line to register beginning Tuesday September 15. Non-members may register beginning **Tuesday, October 13**. Our organizer, the Center for Global Education at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, assures us that maintaining our personal safety is their primary concern; all fees will be refunded if the trip is cancelled. See the colorful travel brochure for details.

Women's Book Group

There is something for everyone in the next Women's Book Group selection, *The Hour I First Believed* by Wally Lamb (Harper, 2008). Lamb weaves together a

variety of themes and plots dealing with both fate and free will, as his characters face life-changing events. In an interesting twist, both fictional and actual people from the historical past are players in this complex saga.

The New York Times calls Lamb a "modern day Dostoyevsky, whose characters struggle not only with their respective pasts, but with a mocking sadistic God in whom they don't believe but to whom they turn, nevertheless, in times of trouble."

Please join in on **Sunday, September 27** at 12:15 for a lively discussion of this engrossing novel.

New Plan for Caring Hands

Caring Hands is a group of Little River knitters and crocheters who enjoy making items for charities as well as for friends. Instead of meeting monthly, Caring Hands will hold one formal gathering this fall, on **Sunday, October 4** from noon to 2:00. Otherwise, we will keep in touch by email and telephone regarding project ideas and charities. We always welcome new participants. Please contact Carrie Douglas (*bdouglas1 [at] cox [dot] net*) with any questions.

Little River Matters! Consider . . .

The Stewardship Committee's theme *Little River UCC Matters! To me, my family, my community, and the world!* allows for great introspection about the many ways in which our church affects our lives and the lives of others. As a newer member of the church, I recently contemplated what Little River UCC means to me, when choosing to become a member of the church family.

Taking a moment to ask yourself the following question can provide insight on what our church means to you. What would be missing from your life if Little River were not a part of it? For many it could mean an absence of close friendships that grow out of a church family, the spiritual connection from attending worship, or even the opportunity to partake in extracurricular activities that help one to grow as a person.

Personally, Little River UCC means having one hour on Sunday where my husband and I can worship together and learn more about our selves and our beliefs. The sermons give us the opportunity to critically analyze and discuss a topic that we might not have otherwise considered in our normal day-to-day routine of working full-time and raising children. For me, Little River UCC means allowing me to continue grow spiritually as an individual, as well as a wife and mother.

Next Sunday, as you sit in the pew listening to the music prior to the start of the service, I encourage you to ask yourself the same question. You might be surprised what you uncover!

Little River UCC Matters! *Our support matters too.*
Kelly Loss



Social Action Double-Header

The Christian Social Action committee is sponsoring two compelling programs on criminal justice at 11:00 on two Sundays, **October 18 and 25**. Growing up with a mother wrongfully imprisoned, reform in VA with Del. Dave Marsden, and community leaders telling us what is working and how we might help will be the focus of these lively two sessions.

Youth Rep on UCC Council

Elizabeth MacCullagh, daughter of former member Bruce MacCullagh,, was elected to the UCC Executive Council as an at-large high school representative.

High-school-age members of Little River who wish to express opinions on the restructuring of the National UCC, General Synod 28 (2011 in Florida), or other issues coming before Executive Council are welcome to contact her. Until she settles in at school, please write her at 3 Marcel St., South Hadley MA 01075.

Help Host Coffee Hour

If you enjoy coffee and conversation after Sunday services, you'll love hosting a coffee hour! There are lots of opportunities available. Stop by the Coffee Hour table in the narthex to sign up. You don't need to confirm a date now—just put your name on the list and the Fellowship Committee will contact you.

Baltimore Oktoberfest & Art Fair

Christ E&R UCC in Baltimore, Jim Bell's parish, will celebrate fall with an Oktoberfest and art fair **Saturday and Sunday, October 31-November 1**.

Artists and craft makers will offer many excellent and unusual creations including jewelry, baskets, turned wood pens, painted ostrich eggs, old-world Santas and ornaments, and German cut-paper *Scherenschnitte*. Two live bands will fill the air with buoyant music.

Children will enjoy watching or taking part in the Halloween costume parade and the parade of pets, as well as moon bounce, face painting, and other treats.

A *sauer* beef dinner will be served between noon to 6:00 on Saturday, and vendors will sell a variety of food throughout the festival. Of course there will be a German beer garden with music and dancing.

The festival is open 9:00-6:00 on Saturday and Sunday from noon to 5:00.

To raise money for parish growth and development, an "Ultimate Ravens vs. Steelers Package" is being raffled: a pair of midfield tickets each for the November 29 game in Baltimore (with parking and hospitality) and the December 27 game in Pittsburgh (including airfare and lodging). Four hundred tickets are being sold in advance and 100 more at the fair, at \$25 each. The winner need not be present at Oktoberfest.

Christ Church is located at 1308 Beason Street, Baltimore 21230. For more information or tickets, contact Jim (*jasmb [at] aol [dot] com*).

Reclaim Your Coffee Mugs

We have been using blue and white cups for our coffee hours for some time, so the cupboard filled with personal mugs is no longer useful. If you have a mug you would like to keep, please take it home. Unclaimed mugs will be donated to charity so we can use the cupboard for other storage.





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, and 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 to subscribe). A public version, *eCurrents*, is posted at www.lrucc.org; click on About Us > Newsletter: *eCurrents*.

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