

eCURRENTS

LITTLE RIVER UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Editor: H.E. Beckwith

Papering Over Our Problems?

At long last, I'm beginning to realize what is fueling the explosive anger and intense malaise among the U.S. body politic. Too many things are being changed; too many things are being taken away from us. The September 24 *Washington Post* trumpeted the latest indignity on page one. Someone wants to take away our Downy Ultra bathroom tissue. According to this article, it takes older trees with longer wood fibers to produce that soft, fluffy tissue we use to pamper our bottoms, and some bleeding-heart tree-huggers think it is more important to save a few billion trees rather than treat our posteriors to the respect and comfort which they deserve.

What a terrible idea! If you think the American electorate is cranky now, just wait until they have no alternative to recycled bathroom tissue, replete with splinters and wood chunks in every square! This is going too far, way too far. Next thing you know someone will want us to drive less—using smaller and more fuel-efficient cars when we do. What's this world coming to, anyway?

Verne

Special Events October 4

World Communion Sunday: On October 4 we will celebrate the diversity of our world and try to bring the whole globe into our sanctuary. It is our custom to dress the part. If you have a piece of international clothing—a dirndl, sari, sarong, dashiki, huipile, whatever—or an internationally inspired accessory or jewelry, please wear it that day!

Neighbors in Need Offering: On World Communion Sunday, Little River will join congregations across the UCC in collecting the Neighbors in Need offering. This year's theme is "Imagine Another World is Possible."

The Board of Missions recently received a very nice letter from Rev. A. Rebecca West, associate pastor at Plymouth Congregational Church in Washington and the Justice and Witness Ministries Board member representing the Central Atlantic Conference. She wrote, "Thank you so much for your generous gift of \$5,580 to Neighbors in Need in 2008! Two-thirds of your NIN offering goes to support Justice and Witness Ministries and one-third to support the Council of American Indian Ministry Please do what you can to promote this important ministry of justice and peace for all of God's people."

Blessing of the Animals: Little River once again will offer this opportunity October 4 at 12:30 in the grove to the east of the church (or in the social hall if weather is inclement). Plan to bring your favorite pets to this brief, celebrative service of word and song.

Healing Service: This quarterly service for those who seek healing of body, mind, or spirit will take place Sunday at 4:00 in the sanctuary. This informal service includes communion and the ancient rite of laying on of hands. To find out more, speak with Verne or Ginna.

New Directories: The 2009 pictorial directory is finally here! Everyone who had their picture taken for the directory may pick up their copy in the atrium on Sunday, October 4. A limited number of copies will be available for pickup by others in the church office, starting Monday, October 5, while the supply lasts.

The fall **phone and e-mail directory** is also available. Visit the church office to get your copy.

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Next deadline: Thu. Oct. 8, 4:30

lrucc.org/Currents/Currents_Schedule.html

First Friday: Luau Party

Aloha! First Friday launches its new season **October 2** from 6:30-9:30 with a luau party. Everyone needs to fill out a new medical/registration form for the new year. Register your children ages 6 months to 12 years online (www.lrucc.org > Fast Links > First Friday). Teens and adults: volunteer and help spread the fun!

Creating Worship

The Creating Worship group was started last year to allow worship at Little River to benefit from the many gifts of our lay people. This year the group expects to plan and lead three services, beginning November 22.

If you would like to be part of this group, please contact Julie Holm ([jholm\[at\]dragonholm\[dot\]org](mailto:jholm@dragonholm.org)) or come to our first meeting Sunday, **October 4** at 12:15. After lunch, which will be provided, we will begin planning for the service.

Creative Writing at Little River

Little River's Creative Writing Group gives you the opportunity to write. It is not about grammar or spelling. It is simply an opportunity to write what you want in your own style. Please feel free to try it.

The next meeting is Wednesday evening, **October 7** at 7:00 pm. The topic is Solitude. Normally the group plans to meet each month on the third Friday at 1:30 and the first Wednesday evening at 7:00, to allow those who cannot attend during the day. However, there will be no Creative Writing on Friday, October 16. The group will meet Wednesday, November 4 and Friday, November 20. Feel free to contact Ron Griesse ([R_J_Griesse\[at\]me\[dot\]com](mailto:R_J_Griesse[at]me[dot]com)) with any questions.

Fair Trade Is Back

Stop by the fair trade table just outside the Social Hall on Sunday, **October 11**, after either service and check out all the fair-trade products you've come to love: coffee, tea, chocolate, nuts, and dried fruit. The prices you pay for these fairly traded items ensure that the producers get a fair return for their products.

This sale marks the beginning of Little River's fourth year of promoting fair trade through sales of products, sponsoring of programs focused on fair trade issues, and raising awareness through articles, films, etc. Rebeca, Mark, and Alison Prell continue to take the lead managing our church's role in this worthwhile project.

Estate Gift Workshop

"A Legacy for You, Your Family and Your Church" is the topic of a workshop on Sunday, **October 11**. After a light lunch around noon, the workshop will take place

from 1:00 to 2:30. Our guest presenter is Donaldson Hill, Minister and Team Leader in the Financial Development Ministry of the United Church of Christ. Don will discuss ways in which your estate plan can include gifts that will benefit you, your family and your church. He will address ways to minimize taxes on unused funds in retirement accounts, preserving them for family, church, and charity. Co-sponsored by the Endowment Fund and Stewardship Committees, this is an important event for all who want to keep up with estate planning ideas and issues. Please call the church office or make a note on the friendship pad so sufficient food can be arranged.

Food for Student Meal

Do you know about Table Talk? Little River UCC supports this weekly ministry through United College Ministries of Northern Virginia. Students from George Mason University join in fellowship as they leave campus pressure behind to gather, eat, talk, listen and play together without an agenda. We at Little River have agreed, through our Board of Missions, to provide food two Thursdays twice during this next school year (**October 29** and **April 29**). Other participating churches have filled all the other weeks.

Please sign up to provide food for fifteen: a main dish, a side dish or salad, dessert, and beverages (juice or water instead of soda). Students appreciate home-cooked food, but will be happy with something like frozen lasagna if your time is short. Please include something for vegetarian students. A generous Little River member is providing all the paper goods, and the Board of Missions will reimburse the cost of the food.

The food should be delivered to Saint George's United Methodist Church, 9410 Ox Road, Fairfax (a block south of Braddock Road), shortly before 7:00 p.m. the day of the event.

Questions? Please contact Barbara Lowrey ([lowreybr\[at\]iopening\[dot\]com](mailto:lowreybr@iopening.com)), Caroline Labbé ([clabbe56\[at\]hotmail\[dot\]com](mailto:clabbe56@hotmail.com)), or Janet Mackey ([jparsmack\[at\]aol\[dot\]com](mailto:jparsmack@aol.com)).

Food Transporters Wanted

Make a difference—just by driving your car one or more Thursday evenings in **October!** People are needed to drive boxes of food from Food for Others in Merrifield to Annandale Neighborhood Center, in back of Annandale High school. All you have to do is drive; staff will load and unload your car.

Your hour or so of time (5:00-6:00) will feed many people in our community. If you are interested in being part of the team from Little River, please contact Ginna.

Get Ready for Advent Funshops

With summer giving way to fall, please mark your calendar for Little River's Family Advent Craft Funshops, **Sunday, December 6** from 3:30-5:30, coinciding with the decoration of the church for the Advent season.

We are already looking for volunteers for several different Funshops activities. Specifically, people are needed to set up and clean up, run a craft table, bring food and beverage, play a musical instrument or sing, and organize a cookie swap (details to follow!).

There is a range of possible craft activities. For several we have the materials already; someone merely needs to staff the table. We also welcome volunteers who have a favorite Christmas craft they would like to teach others to make. Children will have opportunities not only to make crafts as gifts and decorate their home or the church, but also to make items to give members who are shut in or others in need.

We hope you will help make the Funshops a special time where we all can slow down enough to feel the brush of God in our lives, our hearts warmed with compassion for others, the darkness of winter made bright, and the peace of Christmas entering our spirits.

Please contact Mary Ellen Ardouny (*mardouny [at] hotmail [dot] com*) or Jill Cetina (*cetina [at] verizon [dot] net*) if you are interested in volunteering. Thank you!

Footsteps to Mexico

On **Sunday, October 11** at 11:00, Mary Weaver will continue our study of Mexico with a discussion of the Aztec, Mayan and Toltec civilizations as they existed in Mexico prior to 1521, when Cortez and other Spanish conquistadors defeated the Aztecs. She will help us explore the pre-Hispanic indigenous religions and how they influenced and were influenced by Catholicism. The discussion will cover the significance of the pyramids and archeological sites which the Little River group will visit in April.

Sessions on November 8, 15, and 22 will trace the country's history up through the Mexican Revolution. All are welcome to join the Footsteps travelers in learning more about the history of our neighbor to the south.

Shaw Ministry Gala

Shaw Community Ministry will host a gala celebration to mark the reopening of its newly renovated space on **Saturday, October 17**, from 1:00 to 4:00. Please come see the new space, meet new Executive Director Anne Troy, and learn more about SCM's new, exciting and active programs! There will be food, music and entertainment for the whole family. SCM is located at 1726 7th St. NW, Washington, one block from the Shaw-Howard University station on the Red Line. Limited street parking is also available.

Our Youth Need You!

Our youth are active and engaged and need your help! With a new youth pastor and a year of activities, we are looking for male and female advisors to help make our youth program a success. We need people who care and are committed to providing a safe space to help our young people grow and be nurtured in Christ, people who are willing to give two hours once a month to help with our regular Sunday youth meetings: Junior PF at 12:15-1:30 and Senior PF at 6:00-8:00.

We are looking for a large group of volunteers so that no one person must carry all the responsibilities. If this is a ministry that speaks to you, please see Amanda Tomkins (*amanda [at] lrucc [dot] org*) for more information, or contact Darlene (*darlene [at] lrucc [dot] org*) at the office.

Program and Budget Hearing

This fall, Stewardship and Trustees will hold their annual forum on next year's programs and proposed budget on Sunday, **October 18**, before we make our individual financial commitments for 2010. The aim is to balance the core premise of "giving in gratitude for God's blessings" with the need to understand next year's financial needs before we make our pledges.

So—come, learn, ask questions at 12:15 on October 18. Chairs of boards and committees will be present to describe their plans for the coming year and answer questions. Child care will be provided.

Criminal Justice: Troubled Legacy

Is Virginia's criminal justice system broken? Is prison the best way to "punish" every offender? Can we afford more prisons, either financially or morally? How can former inmates be helped to re-enter their communities? These and other questions will be addressed in a two-Sunday Our Faith and the World program sponsored by the Christian Social Action Committee:

October 18: Joyce Ann Brown, author of *Justice Denied*, the story of her wrongful 10-year incarceration featured on *60 Minutes*, and her daughter Koquice Spencer, Shaw Community Ministry's Program Director, will share their moving personal stories. And hear social worker and family therapist Sharon Farrar's powerful stories of men in a Maryland correctional facility who grow, learn, and conquer their addictions.

October 25: Virginia Delegate Dave Marsden will speak about his experience in juvenile justice. Formerly president of the Virginia Juvenile Justice Association, he now serves on the legislature's Courts of Justice Committee. Joining him will be John Horejsi of Social Action Linking Together, who will discuss his organization's support of prisoner re-entry programs and its opposition to new prisons in Virginia.

Plan to be there at 11:00 for stimulating and thought-provoking discussions of these timely topics.



Senior PF Phone Recycling

Thank you to all who donated cell phones and accessories for recycling. We sent sixty phones and forty-two chargers to Eco-Cell, and they notified us that \$39.95 was raised to support organizations working to end the suffering in Darfur, including STAND, a student-led organization. Thank you again for supporting this important cause and for recycling!

an enlightened denomination, Little River UCC does, indeed, matter to the world.

As you consider how *Little River Matters—to the World*, please also consider how your support is essential to our “mattering.” To coin a phrase, “it takes a village”—or a congregation.

Gary Allen
Stewardship Committee

Little River UCC Matters!

Little River United Church of Christ matters! To me, my family, my community and the world.

The *whole* world? To paraphrase the mariners’ prayer: The world, Lord, is so large, and our church is so—well, pretty small in the broad scheme of things. Can we really matter that much to the world at large?

But we *do* matter to the world, just as the world matters to us. Our building was designed to enable us to look out into the world, reminding us what our ultimate purpose as a church community is. There is no real border between the communities where we live and work and the wider world. Indeed, in a real sense, our community is the world, and the world our community. What we do close to home cannot help but have a ripple effect further away. As John Donne put it, “no man is an island.” Likewise no community is an island; each is part of “the main.” What we do in and for our closer-in communities really does matter to the world.

And this ripple effect of our ongoing local programs extends in time as well as space. As we encourage the development of our children’s characters and values through our Christian education and youth programs like Y-GELI, we let them know that they can make a difference in this world. And when we send them out into that world—on mission projects now, and later as they fly from their nests—we can rest assured that they will continue to make a difference both locally and in places across the country and world.

Our congregation matters to the world in other ways as well. Our “green” church initiatives, including improvements to our building, will enable us to reduce our carbon footprint. That, too, matters to the world we all live in, because that world matters to us.

And, of course, we matter to the world through our financial contributions to our denomination’s wider missions as well as our local ones. The emphasis here is on the “UCC” in Little River UCC. In addition to our annual missions budget of more than \$90,000, we provide thousands more each year through special offerings such as Neighbors in Need and One Great Hour of Sharing. Working together with other UCC congregations, we do far more than we could ever hope to do on our own. Enlightened religious organizations can marshal and funnel resources in ways that most of us cannot do individually. The UCC is, I believe, one of those enlightened religious organizations that is doing good in this world. As an enlightened congregation of



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

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thought, and faithful action ~

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