

eCURRENTS

LITTLE RIVER UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Volume 56 Number 18

October 26, 2009

Editor: H.E. Beckwith

Fair Trade Festival

On **Sunday, November 22**, the Christian Social Action Committee will host a fair trade festival in collaboration with the Alexandria store of Ten Thousand Villages, one of the world's largest fair trade organizations and a founding member of the International Fair Trade Association. Through sales of unique handmade gifts, jewelry, home decor and personal accessories, Ten Thousand Villages strives to improve the livelihood of tens of thousands of disadvantaged artisans in 38 countries around the world. They do so by establishing a sustainable market that helps to provide a stable income for food, education, health care, and housing for artisans who otherwise would be unemployed or underemployed.

Also featured will be lovely soaps and sachets hand-made by The Giving Circle, a low-income women's group in Reston. Mark and Allison Prell will also be selling fair-trade coffee, tea, chocolate, nuts, and dried fruits.

Be there between 10:00 and 1:00 to browse the wide selection of items for your own use and stock up for Christmas giving. This one-day event will take the place of the SERRV sale we traditionally offer in December; however, a number of SERRV items will be available through Ten Thousand Villages. All funds from your purchases will go to support these worthy organizations.

What's Current . . .

Pastor for Congregational Life	2
Footsteps to Mexico Classes	2
Christmas Pageant Video	2
Little River UCC Matters!	3
Harvest Hoedown	3
Women's Book Group	3
Cook-In for Young Families	2
Learn About Our Wider Mission	3
Advent Funshops: Join the Party!	3
New Safe Space Committee	4
Youth Group Rescheduling	4
Youth Ski Trip	4
Links: Events, People, News	<i>back page</i>
Calendar	<i>lrucc.org > fast links</i>

Next deadline: Thu. Nov. 5, 4:30

lrucc.org/Currents/Currents_Schedule.html

Conversations on Membership

If you are considering membership in the congregation of Little River UCC, you are invited to attend the Conversations on Membership to be held from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. on two consecutive Wednesdays: **October 28** (Session A) and **November 4** (Session B). Session A deals primarily with Little River while Session B deals primarily with the United Church of Christ. Prospective members are encouraged to attend both sessions A and B (in any order or time of their choosing) before joining.

Those ready to covenant with us will do so Sunday, **November 15**. For more information, please speak to Verne or Ginna. The next round of Conversations on Membership will be Sunday afternoons January 24 and 31, with new members received February 15.

First Friday: Mad Science!

Put on your lab coats and join First Friday on **November 6** for a *scientific* look into Mad Science! Who knows what might happen: Flying objects? Shape-shifting? Weird concoctions? Dress as a scientist—and bring your own lab assistant for even more fun!

Parents: register your lab rats at church on Sunday, November 1 or by **Tuesday, November 3** at www.lrucc.org (see the First Friday fast link). First Friday is open to all area children age six months through twelve years. It offers a tasty supper and an evening of fun from 6:30 to 9:30 while parents enjoy an evening off—or a *free* evening per child for each grown-up who helps out. See the website for fees, forms, and details.

Questions? Ask Lorri ([firstfriday \[at\] lrucc \[dot\] org](mailto:firstfriday[at]lrucc[dot]org)).

Ember Evening

Join us in the sanctuary on Wednesday, **November 18** at 7:30 for a time of quiet musically guided prayer. This will be an opportunity to bring into our autumn a time to prepare for Advent, before the hustle-and-bustle of holiday preparations overtakes time for respite.

Pastor for Congregational Life

So what's a Pastor for Congregational Life, anyway?

In May you voted to hire a part-time Pastor for Youth Ministry and change my position description to Pastor for Congregational Life. You did so in good faith because we're all trying to live into transitions in our thinking to accommodate to the emerging church. In that spirit, I have put before our boards and committees some initiatives that draw from the wisdom of wider church literature, yearnings I have heard you express, and my own thirty years' experience in ministry. There are two areas of emphasis our work will be taking in 2009-2010: Young Adult Ministry and Intergenerational Ministry. So what does this look like for now?

Currently the Young Adult Ministry focus has a three-pronged track: college students, young adults (post college-age and career-entry years), and young families. To present a face of the church for our college students I will be making face-to-face visits to see them (college "road trips," if you will). These will likely be confined to Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina, because those areas are approachable and have the largest concentration of our membership. For our local NOVA and GMU students, there will be a "Tailgate: Grab and Go" lunch on each campus. Thanks to Denise May, Campus Minister of United College Ministries, for this idea. In addition, Amanda is continuing our high schoolers' tradition of mailing college students care packages as a PF project sponsored by the Deacons' Parish Care Committee. And we're on Facebook with one another.

The post-college career-entry young adult group has formed a partnership with other churches in the area for Bible study, community meals, and a proposed mission project. For now the name of the group is the Ecumenical Young Adult Ministry of Northern Virginia.

Little River's young families will gather in November for a "cook-in." Jen Beckman has sent Internet E-vites to our young families, inviting them to bring goodies to cook a meal at church and share some time in community. Thanks to Cheryl Urban for this idea!

On the Intergenerational Ministry front, we're following the lead from Rich Dodenhoff and Sue Leathers, who are working with the Fellowship Committee of the Deacons to host a Harvest Hoe-Down for all ages—an evening of dining and dancing with the Country Steppers, who meet in our building. Then in March, we will travel together to Roslyn Retreat Center near Richmond for a weekend of "Receiving the Sabbath" in a glorious natural setting, with leadership provided by Verne and me. In addition, we are working with the Board of Missions to develop an intergenerational mission trip to the Virginia's coal mining country to offer home-repair support to the people of Binns-Counts Community Center, just as the Y-GELI 2 group did this past summer. All ages will be welcome—there's something for everyone to offer.

In support of our Go Green initiative, there is a proposal before the Board of Christian Education to explore the possibility of an "eco-wellness" garden. The

thought is to gather people together who are interested in sustainable living and explore how to grow food in harmony with creation, involving people of as many ages as possible. This project will be based on Carlos Hernandez and Rashmi Mayur's book *Pedagogy of the Earth: Education for a Sustainable Future* and the work of eco-theologian Larry Rasmussen.

Besides these areas of special focus, Congregational Life includes ongoing efforts such as Women's Ministry, programs like Open and Affirming and Welcome Center that were part of Jim Bell's responsibilities, and Christian Education support and general ministry.

So, as you can see, there is much to enjoy and explore, and much to inspire us to put hands and feet to our voices of commitment to justice and care of the soul of all those who live and grow in our community. As our tag line says: Little River is indeed "welcoming diversity, intelligent thought, and faithful action." Won't you come and be part of enriching your own journey?

Peace,
Ginna

Footsteps to Mexico Classes

Footsteps VIII announces the remaining classes in its educational series, open to all at Little River. The series is presented in conjunction with a tour of Mexico next April that will explore "The First Christians in North America and their Legacy of Cross and Sword." All sessions will meet Sunday mornings at 11:00.

- **November 8:** The Spanish Conquest of Mexico (Brian Payne)
- **November 15:** Spanish Colonial History, the Early Republic, and the Mexican War (Gary Allen) (90 minutes)
- **November 22:** The French Intervention Through the Revolution (Bob Lingo)
- **January 17 or 24:** The Evolution of Christianity in Mexico (TBA)
- **February 14:** Twentieth-Century US-Mexico Relations: The Role of Oil (Steve Rogers)
- **February 21:** NAFTA and its Aftermath (Barbara Lowrey)
- **March 7, 14, or 21:** Contemporary Issues in Mexico, Especially as They Relate to the United States (Mexican Embassy representative)

Christmas Pageant Video

The Christmas Eve family worship service will feature a short version of "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever." Think you might want to take part? Watch a video of the play over lunch Sunday, **November 8** at 12:15. Questions? Dietary requests? Let Ginna know.

Little River UCC Matters!

*To me, my family, my community and the world.
Our support matters too.*

This fall we are reflecting on the many ways our church matters. Or is that batters, hatters, ratters, or natters? (Folks who missed worship on October 11 won't understand—you had to be there.)

During worship on **November 8** we will dedicate our pledges of support—our support that underwrites the mattering. In early November each member and friend of Little River UCC will receive a financial pledge brochure with response form and a succinct overview of the proposed budget for 2010. You may return your pledge form by mail if you cannot be in worship on November 8. You'll want to be there, though, if only for the festive coffee hours hosted by the Stewardship Committee to celebrate the dedication of our pledges!

When you receive your pledge materials, you will notice that the Building Fund is no longer a pledging option. When we retired the mortgage this fall, we also retired the Building Fund. However, the maintenance requirements of older sections of our building can no longer be ignored, and all funds previously pledged to the Building Fund will be put to excellent use through the Operating Fund to repair and upgrade areas of concern such as the soon-to-be-movable parking lot and the leaky flat roof.

Other budget highlights include restoration of funding to the Board of Missions for use in the community and beyond (following cuts made to balance the 2009 budget) and a Staff Transition Fund to build reserves for staff transition costs in 2011 and following.

This year our financial pledge brochure features a logo designed by Bryce Summers, a youth member of Little River UCC. Thank you very much, Bryce, for sharing your artwork with the congregation!

Jan Curtis

Stewardship Committee

Harvest Hoedown

Swing your partner, of any age and stage! Or just come watch and enjoy. The Country Steppers and the Fellowship Committee invite you to an intergenerational dinner and dance Saturday, **November 14** from 5:30 to 7:30. Sign up (for \$5 or \$15 per family) at church, call the office, or e-mail Ginna ([ginna \[at\] lrucc \[dot\] org](mailto:ginna@lrucc.org)).

Women's Book Group

Join the Book Group **Sunday, November 15** at 12:15 to discuss *Olive Kitteridge*, Elizabeth Strout's Pulitzer-Prize-winning series of interlinking stories about life in a small coastal town in Maine. Olive, a retired teacher, deplores the changes in her town and the world at large, but she doesn't always recognize the changes

in those around her. As the townspeople grapple with their problems, Olive is brought to a deeper understanding of herself and her own life—sometimes painfully but always with ruthless honesty.

Cook-In for Young Families

Let's celebrate the bountiful harvest with a family cook-in at church! Bring your family and the ingredients for a dish to share, and we'll cook together while our kids play and then share a feast of food and fellowship.

The date is Saturday, **November 21** at 5:00.

Questions? Contact Jen Beckman ([jen \[at\] angryox \[dot\] com](mailto:jen[at]angryox[dot]com)).

Learn About Our Wider Mission

Please join the Board of Missions in welcoming Central Atlantic Conference Minister Rev. Dr. John R. Deckenback on Sunday **December 6**. At 11:00 Rev. Deckenback will present a session on the importance of Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM), also known in the UCC as Wider Church Ministries (WCM).

What is Our Church's Wider Mission? In short, OCWM provides the structure and major programs of the United Church of Christ. It supports missionaries both at home and overseas, new church starts, the staff of the UCC's 39 conferences, and development of church school curricula, as well as support and resources to more than 6,000 UCC churches nationwide. Read more at the UCC website (www.ucc.org/wcm).

Little River supports OCWM Basic Support through the benevolences portion of our annual budget. We contributed \$63,719 to OCWM Basic Support in 2009.

Come December 6 and learn more about this vital outreach mission of the United Church of Christ.

Advent Funshops: Join the Party!

As promised last month, here's more news about the Advent Funshops coming up on **Sunday, December 6** from 3:30 to 5:30. We have catalogued our craft supplies and have posted a signup sheet in the narthex for volunteers for craft tables, setup, cleanup, and snacks. We need lots of volunteers to pull this event off, but we have all the supplies needed for most of the crafts. That will reduce the burden—and maximize the fun!—for prospective volunteers. Be a part of this great Little River holiday social event!

Also, thank you to Jennifer Beckman, who has graciously offered to organize a cookie swap this year. Watch for more news on that—yum, we can hardly wait! Please contact Mary Ellen Ardouny ([mardouny \[at\] hotmail \[dot\] com](mailto:mardouny[at]hotmail[dot]com)) or Jill Cetina ([cetina \[at\] verizon \[dot\] net](mailto:cetina[at]verizon[dot]net)) with any questions, ideas, or offers of help!



New Safe Space Committee

A new Safe Space Committee was formed October 15 by moderator Barbara Lowrey to put into practice the interim policy adopted by the Church Council in May, which will be submitted for approval by the congregation in January. The committee consists of convenor Heidi Warrington, Hal Price, Bruce Douglas, and Verne Arens as senior pastor. A by-laws amendment will also be proposed at January's annual meeting to make this a standing committee of our congregation.

Youth Group Rescheduling

Between November 1 and January 31, the Junior and Senior High Pilgrim Fellowships will meet monthly rather than every week. Both groups will meet at their usual times Sunday, **November 1**. The next event is the Help the Homeless Walkathon on Saturday, **November 21**. Other joint events—the Advent Funshops on Sunday, **December 6** and the **January 29-30** ski trip—will go on as planned. Watch your e-mail for a new schedule.

Youth Ski Trip

Plan to hit the slopes Friday-Saturday, **January 29-30** at Seven Springs! All youth, families, and friends are invited to join the Junior and Senior Pilgrim Fellowships for this ski outing. This Pennsylvania resort is one of the best in the mid-Atlantic region, with beginner, intermediate, and double-diamond slopes.

The current cost, now looking like \$200, includes lodging for one night and a lift ticket for Friday and Saturday. Ski rentals for the two days would be about \$60. The PFs have reserved two condos for this event, so space is limited. If you can attend, contact the church office to let Darlene Lane know (darlene@lrucc.org). Watch for more information!





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 ~

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

Pastor for Congregational Life

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

Pastor for Youth Ministry

Amanda Tomkins
amanda [at] lrucc [dot] org



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*.

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.