



Welcome, New Members!

Little River UCC received five friends into membership November 15: Andrea & Geoff Carpenter, Jared Tuszyński & Emily Tuszyńska, and Jeanne Fulford, who became an associate member. Watch for introductions in the next *Currents*.

Thanksgiving Offering

It's not too late to make a Thanksgiving offering to the Deacons' and Pastors' Benevolence Fund, which is used to respond to individual emergency needs. Use the "Thanksgiving" envelope included with your offering envelopes, or simply write a check payable to Little River UCC and mark it "Thanksgiving." Thank you.

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Next deadline: Thu. Nov. 19, 4:30
lruc.org/Currents/Currents_Schedule.html

Advent-Christmastime Events

November 29 *First Sunday of Advent*

- **Advent Wreath** At worship we mark the beginning of the church year by lighting the first Advent candle.

December 6 *Second Sunday of Advent*

- **Communion and Food Offering** of non-perishable items for the pantry of Fairfax FISH, serving those in our area in urgent need.
- **Advent Funshops** (3:30) features holiday crafts for all ages, a cookie swap, music, and goodies.

December 13 *Third Sunday of Advent*

- **Advent Choral Music** at worship (9:30, 11:00).
- **White Gift Service** (5:00) Children and adults experience the meaning of the Christmas season through our enactment of the Magi bringing their gifts to Jesus. Worshipers young and old follow the procession, offering gifts wrapped in plain white for children of low-income families. (See "Advent Booklets, Tree" below.) A reception will follow.

December 20 *Fourth Sunday of Advent*

- **Worship with Carols** (9:30 & 11:00) Joyous worship to anticipate the Nativity!

December 24 (Thursday) *Christmas Eve*

- **Family Pageant** (5:00) "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" features the talents of Little River's most enthusiastic actors and singers!
- **Candlelight Worship** (9:00) A mood of joyful wonder on Christmas Eve with lessons, carols, and reflection.
- **The Christmas Offering** will be received at both evening services. Half will benefit the Christmas Fund (for retired UCC clergy in need) and half will be support local direct aid as determined by the Board of Missions. Make checks payable to Little River UCC and noted Christmas Offering.

December 27 *First Sunday after Christmas*

- **Worship at 11:00 only:** Joyous worship for all ages rings in the new year. Care will be available for infants and toddlers; church school will not meet.

Pick Up Children's Art

Thank you for sharing your art with us in the hallway. To make way for Advent decorations, please pick it up between now and Sunday, **November 29**.

Committed to Memory

New Orleans was full of bliss for us newlyweds. We ate well and danced. We saw some remaining damage from Katrina, but mostly the city seemed in a state of jubilation. Even the recession seemed distant. Is the city doing well or were appearances deceiving?

Many thousands have still not returned since the hurricane. Why don't we share the story of their absence? Historically the city was comprised of those of African and Native American heritage forced to settle in the swamplands of Louisiana. Who tells their stories? In the oldest graveyards, the tombs have been recently whitewashed, as if the stories of those inside were as homogenous as their white overcoats. Do these histories remain trapped in the catacombs?

Recently, I learned of the birth of Little River UCC. From its very conception the church stood against racism. I also learned that one of our parishioners was a Tuskegee Airman. What amazing stories! Think of the inspiration they offer in the struggle against injustice! One of the greatest gifts we can offer is to fight our society's strategic memory loss and to share stories of joy, sorrow, hope, growth, and doggedness. In New Orleans, life is lived in the dance-hall present, obscuring what we know is the truth. Let not our histories remain buried, hidden from God's healing presence.

Amanda

Advent Booklets, Tree, Funshops

Little River's Advent booklet will be available in the narthex by Sunday, **November 29**. Please take one to help your household move gently into the season and focus on the spiritual journey the season offers.

The White Gift Christmas Tree is now in the atrium expressing the Christmas hopes of young children from ACCA, Main Street Child Development Center, and Shaw Community Ministry. Please purchase *one* of the gifts listed on *each* tag you take (or something similar) in the \$25-\$50 range. Bring the gifts, wrapped in plain white paper, to the White Gift service **December 13** or leave them at church before then. Please take only as many tags as you are able to provide gifts.

Advent Funshops are coming! On Sunday, **December 6** from 3:30-5:30, there will be holiday craft tables for the children, a cookie swap (extras will go to our church's friends in need), music, and goodies. We will need cookie bakers and lots of extra hands for set-up, clean-up, and to help run the craft tables. Volunteer sign-up sheets are posted in the narthex. Contact Mary Ellen Ardouny (mardouny@hotmail.com) or Jill Cetina (cetina@verizon.net) for more information. Please join us for this much-loved holiday tradition!

Comin' Down First Friday Lane

Here comes Santa Claus, here comes Mortimer, right down First Friday Lane! We'll be checking our list

and checking it twice; make sure your child—whether naughty or nice—is on the list for **December 4** at 6:30 p.m. Mortimer will entertain you with his latest escapades and Santa will share cookies with all.

Sign up at church on Sunday, November 29 or by Tuesday, **December 1** at www.lrucc.org (follow 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@lrucc.org).

P.S. Calling all bakers! First Friday needs many hands to make small Christmas cookies for Cookies with Santa December 4. If you like to bake and want to share your sweets please contact Lorri. Due to allergies, no nuts or peanut butter, please.

Creative Writing Group

The next meetings of Little River's creative writing group will be Wednesday, **December 2** at 7:00, on the subject of "milk and cookies," and Friday, **December 18** at 1:30, on a theme to be announced

Pageant Talent Search

The "Best Christmas Pageant Ever" crew is looking for people who can provide the following: small risers to set scenes apart, a theater spotlight, costume and makeup direction, and set and scenery design. Do you feel called to help? Show time is during the 5:00 Christmas Eve service, and rehearsals take place Sundays in December after the 11:00 service. A light lunch will be provided—and you'll get a star in your crown! Please see Ginna if you are willing and able to help.

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**. Rev. Deckenback will discuss the importance of Our Church's Wider Mission (also known in the UCC as Wider Church Ministries) at the 11:00 Our Faith in the World session.

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 our annual budget. In 2009 we contributed \$63,719. Come December 6 and learn more about this vital outreach mission.

Cook-In Postponed

The Young Families cook-in has been postponed until after the first of the year to reduce holiday stress. If you are interested in helping to re-organize it, please contact Jen Beckman (*jen [at] angryox [dot] com*) or Ginna.

Creating Worship

Creating Worship thanks everyone who suggested ideas for the Litany of Thanksgiving November 22.

Creating Worship is a group of members who meet to share their gifts in worship several times a year. If you would like to be involved with the group, please contact Julie Holm. You can also come to one of our planning sessions. The group will meet Sunday, **December 6** to begin planning their next worship service, January 17.

Social Justice U

The Northern Virginia Chapter of the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy cordially invites you to participate in its annual Social Justice U, an educational training program on faithful advocacy and civic participation. Central issues will include: poverty and the working poor, health care access, criminal justice, and stewardship and care for creation. Plan to join us for talks with experts who will present current information and guide discussion on ways to take action to make Virginia a more just and compassionate commonwealth.

The event will take place Sunday, **December 6** from 2:30 to 5:00 at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, 4444 Arlington Boulevard (at the corner of North George Mason Drive), Arlington, 22204. No reservations are needed.

Young Adult Lunch

Hello, Little River young adults! Please join the Young Adult group Sunday, **December 13** for lunch at Minerva Indian Cuisine's Fairfax location, at 10364 Fairfax Boulevard. If you'd like to carpool, meet us in the atrium around 12:15, or just meet us at the restaurant at 12:45. Please let Cameron Lynn (*finaqueena [at] yahoo [dot] com*) know if you're coming and if you want to carpool, so we'll know how big a table to get and whether to wait for you at church. Hope to see you at Minerva Fairfax!

Spring Retreat: Register Now

We're doing something new. Yes, it may seem early to register for a retreat that will take place March 12-14

at Roslyn Retreat Center in Richmond, but it isn't! Please see the poster in the atrium with detailed information of the design and hope as well as the cost. All registrations will need to be submitted to the office with a deposit by **December 15**. This opportunity is sponsored by the Board of Deacons and will be led by Verne and Ginna. We intentionally welcome all ages and stages to participate in this potentially inspiring time together.

More About Planned Giving

What's the difference between a bequest, a charitable gift annuity, and a charitable remainder trust? How can you use these to benefit yourself, your family, and your church or other charity? What tax advantages do they provide?

These are some of the questions that were addressed by Don Hill of the UCC Financial Development Ministry Team at his workshop at Little River on November 11. Watch for short items about planned, deferred, and life income gifts in coming issues of *Currents* and the Sunday bulletin. We have copies of Don's handouts to share, and we can tell you how to obtain additional information. Just ask Brian Payne, Chair of the Endowment Fund Committee (*brianrpayne [at] verizon [dot] net*), or speak to Verne or Ginna if you want to learn more.

Stewardship Matters!

The stewardship campaign is off to a strong start this year, with 107 pledges submitted as of November 15. (Last year we received a total of 203 pledges.) Members have pledged a total of \$405,388, which brings us to 59 percent of last year's total of \$687,667.

We know this has been a difficult year for many, so we especially want to thank the 42 members who have pledged a total of \$15,050 more than they did last year—an average increase of 9.3 percent. These increased pledges, as well as new pledges, are greatly needed in order to underwrite our ministries and to offset the loss of some pledges due to members' moving out of town or death.

If you have yet to make your pledge for 2010, please pick up a stewardship brochure from a literature rack and drop the pledge form off in the church office. Thank you for showing us that *Little River matters—to you, to the community, and to the world!*

Neil Carey
Stewardship Committee

Missions Coupons: Thanks

The Board of Missions would like to thank everyone who purchased Mission Gift Certificates during the Missions Fair on October 25 and the November 22 Fair Trade Festival. Your generous support of Little River's mission projects is much appreciated.

Thank You, UNICEF Goblins!

A big thank you to the little folk from Little River who participated in Trick or Treat for UNICEF this year! Proceeds help children in developing countries in need of vaccinations, blankets, school supplies, and other life-giving necessities. In our first year in recent memory of doing Trick or Treat for UNICEF, Little River's Halloween princesses and superheroes raised \$120.15. To put this in perspective, \$45 provides school supplies for 20 kids and \$112 provides 37 emergency blankets. The kids helped take a step towards all God's children having the tools they need to lead healthy, productive lives. Be sure to share the good news with your little people and give them a big hug.

The Board of Missions

The Board of Christian Education

Currents Schedule for 2010

Currents will appear on the following schedule during the first half of 2010. Deadlines fall on Thursdays at 4:30. Currents is mailed on Tuesdays (or Wednesdays of holiday weeks as noted*).

<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Mailing</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Mailing</i>
Jan 14	Jan 20*	Apr 8	Apr 13
28	Feb 2	22	27
Feb 11	17*	May 6	May 11
25	Mar 2	20	25
Mar 11	16	June 3	June 8
25	29	17	22

Women's Book Discussion

The holidays are coming soon, so here's a heads-up: Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* (Vintage, 2005) is the book we'll discuss on **January 21** at 12:15. Set in Turkey, this New York Times Book Review "best book of the year" is sure to intrigue, puzzle, irritate and enthrall readers. The author also holds a Nobel Prize for literature. All women are welcome to join in this discussion.

Janet Mackey

Gratitude from the Rosses

The Ross family would like to extend their appreciation for all the prayers, cards and notes from members of Little River UCC following the death of Tommy Ethan Ross on Wednesday, November 4th. Tommy's life was enriched by the love and support he received from friends, family and Little River during his five years of life. Tommy's love touched many and he reminds us how important each and every accomplishment is in life, even those things we frequently take for granted. A special thanks to all those young people who helped support and walked in the annual Angelman Walk every spring. Further information on Angelman's Syndrome is available at the following web site (www.angelman.org). There is a memorial site for Tommy; just click on the home page under memorials.

Book Gift Suggestion

Each spring Verne leads a discussion of a book dealing with religion or theology. If you're looking for a gift suggestion for an adult member of your family, or need an idea for your own gift list, consider this spring's selection: *The First Paul, Reclaiming the Radical Visionary Behind the Church's Conservative Icon* by Marcus Borg and Dominic Crossan (HarperOne, 2009). It lists for \$24.99 but can be found for \$16.49.





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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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.