

eCURRENTS

LITTLE RIVER UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Editor: H.E. Beckwith

Haiti and Basics

The images and stories from Haiti are chilling, even horrific. The *Washington Post* got it right with its one-word headline, "Catastrophe." Interesting, isn't it, how quickly life can be reduced to the most basic elements: water, food, medical care, clothing, shelter. Suddenly it doesn't matter who is Roman Catholic and who is Protestant, who has schooling and who is illiterate. Everyone is clinging to life and loved ones with new appreciation.

It is at times like this I am reminded how closely we are bound together. Only the truly calloused (or those experiencing their own personal "earthquakes") can go on as if nothing has happened. The rest of us need to pause, catch our breath, and mutter a prayer. Maybe also we look at a glass of ice water with deeper appreciation, while snuggling a little closer to those we love. We also can do the practical equivalent to rolling up our sleeves and getting to work: we can write a check which will support the work of trained and experienced disaster relief specialists. Your check can be placed in the offering plate Sunday, made out to Little River UCC with "Haiti" noted on the memo line; or you can visit the UCC web site (www.ucc.org/make-a-gift/) and follow the Haiti Earthquake Relief links. In the caring hands of the UCC's partner denominations and organizations, that check soon will become something essential: a bottle of water, a box of bandages & ointments, a warm meal.

Verne

Notice of Annual Meeting

The 2010 Annual Meeting of the Little River United Church of Christ will take place **Sunday, January 31** at 11:00 a.m. Principal business of the meeting will include:

- receipt of the reports of officers, boards, and committees,
- election of officers and members of boards and committees,
- adoption of the budget for 2010,
- adoption of the interim Safe Church policy,
- revision of the bylaws to recognize the Staffing Committee as a subcommittee of Church Council and to recognize the Safe Church committee as a new standing committee,
- other business as may be appropriate.

Most of the annual reports for 2009 will be available by the previous Sunday, though financial data will not be ready until the meeting.

Because of the meeting, **worship will take place at 9:30 only**. Child care will be available during the meeting. Consider bringing a nutritious snack for your child (or yourself) in case the meeting runs long.

Watch for the official call to the meeting, which will be posted at church by January 24 and which may include additional information.

Conversations on Membership

The second Conversation on Membership for those considering membership at Little River will be held from 3:00 to 4:30 on Sunday, **January 31** (Session A, which focuses on the congregation of Little River, is **January 24**). Session B deals primarily with the larger 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, **February 14**. For more information, please speak to Verne or Ginna. The next round of Conversations on Membership will be Wednesday evenings April 28 and May 5, with new members received May 16.

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Next deadline: Thu. January 28, 4:30
lruc.org/Currents/Currents_Schedule.html

Guantanamo Update

The Christian Social Action Committee is pleased to announce that attorney Gary Thompson will join his colleagues Doug Spaulding and Allison Lefrak **Sunday, January 24** to give us an update on cases of Guantanamo detainees they have represented. Doug and Allison visited us in 2007 to share pictures and tell the stories of three of their clients. In fact, they will leave again for Guantanamo the day after this visit.

One of their clients, Ghanim Abdulrahman Al-Harbi, a Saudi national, was transferred to Saudi custody in the summer of 2007 along with fifteen others and was sent to a "deradicalization" center. A second client, Zainulabidin Merozhev, was returned to his native Tajikistan in November 2008. The third client, Ravil Mingazov, is a former ballet dancer and the only Russian remaining at Guantanamo. The town council of Amherst, Massachusetts recently passed a resolution asking Congress to repeal legislation blocking the resettlement of Guantanamo detainees in the United States and offering to accept Mingazov for settlement in Amherst.

In addition to learning more about what has happened to these individuals since Doug and Allison's previous visit, we hope to gain some insight into how conditions at Guantanamo have changed, the impact of their Guantanamo experience on the detainees and their families, recent progress in resettling or transferring other detainees, and remaining obstacles to the closure of the Guantanamo detention facility. The discussion should also help us place these matters in the larger context of the moral challenges posed by our continuing confrontation with terrorism.

The Christian Social Action Committee invites you to this Our Faith and the World seminar at 11:00.

Souper Bowl of Caring

Please help Little River's Pilgrim Fellowship during the Souper Bowl of Caring on Sundays, **January 31** and **February 7**. This program builds on the excitement surrounding the Super bowl season to mobilize youth to fight hunger and poverty in their local communities. On these two Sundays, empty your pockets of change (or your billfold of bills!) into the large soup pots in the narthex. All we collect will be donated directly to Food for Others in Fairfax.

Twenty years ago a single youth group in South Carolina, inspired by the prayer, "Lord, as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us to be mindful of those without even a bowl of soup to eat," started the Souper Bowl of Caring. Since then, ordinary young people have generated an extraordinary \$60 million for soup kitchens, food banks, and other charities in communities across the country. In addition, hundreds of thousands of youth have experienced for themselves the joy and satisfaction of giving and serving, inspiring people of all ages to follow their generous example.

"Burma-Shave" Signs

The Evangelism Committee of the Board of Deacons hopes you have enjoyed the signs placed along our driveway. These signs are meant to mimic the Burma-Shave jingles posted along America's highways in the 1930s and 40s. We invite you to suggest new jingles to replace the existing ones—four or five short lines that extol the virtues of Little River UCC. Humor is invited!

Please submit your suggestions by **Sunday, February 14** to the church office or Board of Deacons. First and second prizes: your work displayed along the driveway!

Welcome Center Is for You Too!

Ready to begin the new year with a refreshing, new experience? Why not spend time with some of the shy but eager international students who come to Welcome Center? If you are occasionally available on Thursday afternoons, drop by the Jubilee Room between 3:30 and 7:00 as your schedule permits. Treat yourself to some new friends while you help students learn more about us and our area. If you are not free on Thursdays, please consider inviting one or two students to join you or your family for a home-cooked meal or an outing like skiing. Perhaps you will enjoy your time with these appreciative young people so much that you will be tempted to "adopt" a student to share another such day. If you have an idea for another type of activity, please let us hear it. We hope to build our relationships with more activities at other times. If you would like to discuss one of these ideas, please contact Lois Wyatt (*loisESL [at] verizon [dot] net*) or Bill Hartzler (*wdhartzler [at] yahoo [dot] com*).

Open Mike Night: Sign Up

There's still room on the Open Mike Night program for your song, wit, dramatics, hot licks, dazzling tricks, or other entertaining act! Club Little River opens for one night only on **Saturday, February 6**, with our wonderful band, food, and local talent. Want to be part of it? Talk to Julie Holm or Dave Shepherd. If you want the band to back you up, you need to get sheet music to Dave or Julie by **Sunday, January 24**. If you're having trouble finding music, or finding it in your key, talk to Julie, who has an online source and may be able to help! For more info contact *openmikenight [at] lrucc [dot] org*.

Flower Donations

The 2010 flower chart is posted in the social hall. You are invited to sign up to give flowers on the Sunday of your choice on a first-come basis. Please note there are several openings in February.

Sign Up for Place Setters

Place Setters provides opportunities for small groups to get to know one another better over a series of meals. The meals may be held in homes, restaurants, parks, or wherever each group decides. Groups typically meet once a month for four months, with members taking turns hosting as they are able and all contributing parts of the meal. Groups are now being formed for the coming season. Stop by the Place Setters table in the narthex during **January** to sign up.

Offering Envelopes

Please pick up your 2010 pledge envelope boxes in the atrium today—unless you give electronically or have requested no envelopes. If you are expecting a box in your name and find none, please contact Stewardship Chair Jan Curtis to clarify your pledge commitment for 2010. Remembering to pick up your envelopes saves the church \$2 in postage to mail your box! Thank you.

Thanks for White Gifts

Dear Rev. Arens,

Once again, members of the Little River [United] Church of Christ have opened their hearts and generously shared with the children of Main Street Child Development Center. Your partnership with our Center has made it possible for families who struggle to make ends meet, to enjoy the holidays and to be filled with the hope that Christmas offers. The staff at Main Street and I are grateful to all of you who participated in this wonderful annual project of providing our children with wonderful books, toys, puzzles, and games.

Please extend our gratitude to Fran DuRocher, Siggie Moser, and Mr. Wright, who brought the wrapped gifts to Main Street. What wonderful "Santa helper" they are.

Best wishes to you and your entire congregation for a Happy New Year!

We love this partnership. Please pass along our blessings.

*Fondly,
Elizabeth Egan*

Census Jobs

The Census Bureau is recruiting temporary part-time census takers for the 2010 census. These short-term jobs offer good pay, flexible hours, paid training, and reimbursement for work-related expenses such as mileage. Census takers work right in their own communities.

These jobs are excellent for people who want to work part-time, those who are between jobs, or anyone who wants to earn extra money while performing an important service. Call 1-866-861-2010 to apply.





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[at]lrucc[dot]org)). Submit notices 3 weeks ahead of events if possible.