



## The Cure Is Community

Do you have direct contact with anyone who is lonely—not alone, but lonely? If so, a recent study concludes you are 52% more likely to be lonely yourself. Moreover, if a friend or colleague is in contact with someone who is lonely, you are 25% more likely to be lonely yourself! Loneliness, it seems, is contagious, possibly pervasive. Even in this Facebook/Blackberry world where all kinds of electronic connections are being made, it's still possible for people to feel isolated, and afraid, and those people affect us.

We in the church have an answer for loneliness: it's called community; it's called a local congregation where people gather to worship God—learning how to be more fully and authentically human while sharing their thanksgivings and concerns. When we covenant with one another by becoming a church member we are saying, in part, that we will care about—and for—one another: reaching out to those on the fringes while bringing them closer to the center. The Christian view is that we are created for communion with God, and one another. We regularly live into that view on Sundays at 9:30 and 11:00, and at other times also. That's why we need your presence and caring; you may need ours too.

*Verne*

## Welcome, New Members!

On February 14 Little River welcomed ten friends into full membership. Congratulations to Amy Clayton & Tawny Hammond, Glen & Marilyn Denlinger, Andrew Hunter & Karen Kleiber, Judy Miller, Don Reynolds, Ken Shackley, and David Styers. Look for introductions in the next *Currents*.

## One Great Hour of Sharing

One Great Hour of Sharing: it's our response to the prayers of those struck by disaster in Haiti and elsewhere. In the Bible, Jesus Christ appears to disciples like us. He reminds us that he loved ordinary people; he commands us to care for them as our way of being faithful to him (John 21:15-17).

We hear about the faith and hope of the Haitian people as they cope each day with the aftermath of the earthquake. Through the United Church of Christ, our gifts are used in Haiti to provide medicine, equipment for water safety, temporary housing, food, and more.

On **Sunday, March 14** we at Little River have an opportunity to be faithfully generous through our One Great Hour of Sharing special offering. Please use the envelope attached. Make your check payable to Little River UCC with the memo OGHS.

On March 14 please become part of the answer to prayers of those struck by disaster.

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**Next deadline: Thu. February 25, 4:30**  
*Schedule: lrucc.org > About Us > eCurrents*

## Mexico: NAFTA and *Campesinos*

On **Sunday, February 21** at 11:00 we continue our series on understanding the history and development of Mexico. Barbara Lowrey, an international economist, will discuss whether the North American Free Trade Agreement, adopted in 1994, led to the "giant sucking sound" predicted by Ross Perot in 1992. She will explore its impact on the *maquiladores*, workers employed in assembly plants along the US-Mexican border, and on the quantity of international investment in real and financial assets. Her main focus, though, will be on the impact of the reduction in quotas, tariffs, and price guarantees on the millions of Mexican *campesinos* who have relied on corn production for their livelihood.

## Lenten Journey

This year's Lenten series will examine the concept of the Sabbath as seen from the perspectives of Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism. These three programs will take place Wednesday evenings, **February 24 and March 3 and 17**, and will be preceded by a simple supper of soup and bread at 6:45.

## Congratulations, Rev. Hopkins!

The next time you see our Pastor for Youth Ministry, be sure to call her "The Rev.!" Amanda Hopkins was ordained to ministry in the United Church of Christ on Sunday, February 14 at her home church, St. John UCC in Strasburg, Ohio. The ordination was conferred by the Reverends Rich Plant and Sandy Hutchinson, who represented the East Ohio Association of the UCC. Amanda's husband, Dr. David Hopkins; her parents, Kathy and Bill Mauk; and Little River's Ginna Minansian Dalton also took part in the service. Following the laying on of hands and ordination prayer, Amanda led the congregation in the celebration of communion. A reception followed the service.

Representatives of the East Ohio Association presented Amanda with a stole, and the Rev. Gary Friend, St. John's pastor, gave her a gift certificate for a robe from Little River and St. John. Jan and Dave Curtis joined Ginna and Sam Dalton in representing our congregation at Amanda's ordination.

## The Show Will Go On!

Perhaps you noticed that Open Mike Night was rudely upstaged by couple feet of snow. But the show will go on! Club Little River will open its doors **Saturday, February 27**. Our stellar refreshment crew, the celestial harmony of the Little River Irregulars (more irregular than ever!), emcee Brian Payne's meteoric wit, and our glittering galaxy of headliners is sure to supply a scintillating evening of fun and fellowship. The stars come out at 7:30—and the skies *will* be clear! Don't miss it.

## Discover Our New Web Site

Have you visited [www.lrucc.org](http://www.lrucc.org) lately? Our newly redesigned Web site launched recently to enthusiastic reviews for its ease of navigation, attractive graphics, and depth of information.

One goal of the project was to create community by inviting interaction among users. The Sermons area now allows visitors to comment on each sermon, and the home page has both a forum for discussions and a blog hosted by the Christian Social Action Committee.

Another goal was to create a site that introduces visitors to Little River UCC in an inviting manner and helps Little River users find information easily and quickly. The topical headings across the top of each page never leave a user "stranded," and the link to Schedules, Procedures, and Policies at the bottom of every page takes the user to coffee hour instructions, the Safe Church Policy, and more in just two keystrokes.

The How to Participate button leads to a robust collection of information on the many ways to get involved in church life, with links to next steps. The calendar displays key items on the home page and automatically removes and stores entries once their dates have passed.

An essential feature of the new site is the "content management system" that makes it easy for folks with no Web training to manage information on the site. Members of boards and committees are expected to help keep their sections of the site up to date.

Some functions are still under construction—particularly the forum. While the Communications Advisory Team wishes that the site were completely finished, after three years of work we can wait another week or two!

**User training:** At 2:00 next Sunday, February 21, the Communications Advisory Team will host a two-hour training for people who will help keep portions of the site current. We'll learn how to edit, remove, and post material and how to upload photos and attachments. If this is your job for your board, committee, or group, please attend!

## New Church Directory

A new edition of our church directory is in the works. Please let the church office know **now** of any additions or corrections to names, addresses, phone numbers, or e-mail addresses for your household—or for out-of-town family members.

Please send updates by e-mail or on paper.

## Your Pledge Dollars at Work

The Stewardship Committee would like to inform the entire congregation about how important our pledge dollars are to keeping the church running, so we're starting this occasional column to report on budget items that might surprise you.

In this amazingly snowy weather, you might like to know how much it costs to plow the church driveway and parking lot. Clearing snow from the early January storm (only one inch!) cost the church about \$500. The December 19 storm of about 15 inches cost a grand total of \$2,200! And, of course, these aren't "optional" expenses—you can't open the church if people don't have access to it. If the snow isn't plowed, so many other things cannot happen: no Sunday worship, no music, and no church school, to name a few.

Stay tuned for the further costs associated with the February storms. Isn't it spring yet?!

## Visit from Embassy Official

The adult education series on Mexico and U.S.-Mexican relations will continue with a presentation on Mexico and its relations with the U. S. on **Sunday, March 14** at 11:00. The speaker will be Enrique Escarza, Head of the Political Office in the Mexican Embassy. While the timing of the series was set to prepare Footsteps travelers for their tour to Mexico April 7-21, this event is for everyone who is concerned with what happens at and across our southern border.

## Installation Postponed

Snow preempted our installation of newly elected leaders and ordination of new Deacons. This will now take place **Sunday, March 7**. Please plan to attend.

## Celebration for Ginna

On **Sunday, June 27** we will celebrate the wonderful ministry of Ginna Minasian Dalton at an all-church brunch following our single service. We hope you all can be with us.

## Book Group: *Mudbound*

Hillary Jordan's first novel, *Mudbound*, winner of the 2006 Bellwether Prize for literature of social responsibility, is a riveting story of two families, one white and one black, on a struggling farm in the Mississippi Delta where Jim Crow racism still thrives in 1946. Two young veterans, one from each family, returns to the South, each changed profoundly by his war experiences in Europe and each unwilling to bow to the old rules of the South. Jordan captures the horror and degradation of racism told through the voices of both black and white characters, each of whom is profoundly touched by the deep-rooted hatred and mindless prejudice in a story that unfolds to a wrenching yet inevitable ending.

Join the Women's Book Group on **Sunday, March 21** at 12:15 to discuss this eminently readable story.

## Highlights of Snow Week

There weren't many! The church was closed, wiping out events from First Friday on February 5 through choir practice on Thursday, February 11. Late Monday afternoon an intrepid crew led by Chris Weakley shoveled a critical mass of snow from our flat roof—many thanks also to Nathan Groff, Julie Holm, and George Nelson.

Except for postponed events and snow-choked parking, life at Little River is now back to normal.





## Links: Events, People, News

- **Calendar:** Find out about church events at [www.lrucc.org](http://www.lrucc.org) by clicking on the Calendar link on the home page, 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 from the United Church of Christ and learn about our denomination at [lrucc.org](http://lrucc.org) > About Us > eCurrents > News from the UCC.
- **Currents by e-mail:** See the *Currents* web page at [www.lrucc.org](http://www.lrucc.org) > About Us > eCurrents > About eCurrents, or write [webteam \[at\] lrucc \[dot\] 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](mailto:office@lrucc.org)

[www.lrucc.org](http://www.lrucc.org)

#### Senior Pastor

The Rev. Verne E. Arens  
703 ~ 239 ~ 0186  
[verne \[at\] lrucc \[dot\] org](mailto:verne@lrucc.org)

#### Pastor for Congregational Life

The Rev. Ginna Minasian Dalton  
571 ~ 432 ~ 0395  
[ginna \[at\] lrucc \[dot\] org](mailto:ginna@lrucc.org)

#### Pastor for Youth Ministry

Amanda M. Hopkins  
202 ~ 375 ~ 4322  
[amanda \[at\] lrucc \[dot\] org](mailto:amanda@lrucc.org)



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