

eCURRENTS

LITTLE RIVER UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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All Are Called

At my ordination at St. John's Church in Ohio, I experienced homecoming, the warm embrace of my family, worship with old and new friends, colleagues coming together, and a deep sense of joy, humility and celebration. It was the kind of moment that leaves you speechless; you can never find sufficient words to describe it. It was a holy moment, a moment when people come together specifically to affirm your identity as a person and your identity as a Christian set aside for a particular calling. I felt an overwhelming sense of energy, humility, and connectedness when the hands of the whole community fell upon me, and the ministers of our church spoke the traditional words of ordination.

My ordination made me think, however, that the ritual is not only something that clergy ought to experience. In fact, when preparing for an ordination service you learn that it is actually a celebration of Christ's gift of ministry to the church and the ministry of all people in Christ's name. All of us are called to have such an identity and to celebrate it!

Baptisms are a time when we can recognize and celebrate our identity in Christ. So is communion. We are called to the table because of our common identity in the faith! Our worship in church, the committees that we serve, even shoveling snow off our roof—all are actions that confirm and affirm our identity as caring people of faith. How amazing to be known, appreciated, and recognized within a community and before the Holy!! We all have an identity as members of

Little River UCC made tangible through the unique gifts that we bring to our church.

Amanda

One Great Hour of Sharing

On Sunday, March 14, we have an opportunity to give generously through One Great Hour of Sharing, a United Church of Christ special offering which is used for disaster relief in Haiti and elsewhere. Envelopes were attached to the last issue of *Currents*; others are available in the narthex. You may also place a check in the offering plate: make it payable to Little River UCC and with the memo OGHs. Thank you for your response to these great needs.

Lenten Communion, Series

During Lent, we are celebrating communion every Sunday at 11:00 through **March 28** (Palm Sunday), as well as at 9:30 on the usual first Sunday of the month, **March 7**, and on Maundy Thursday evening, **April 1**.

This year's Lenten series, "The Gift of the Sabbath," continues on two Wednesday evenings at 7:30, following a soup-and-bread supper at 6:45. A Muslim view will be presented **March 3** by Professor Khadiga Gamgoum of Northern Virginia Community College. On **March 17**, Minister Kaz Nakata of Ekoji Buddhist Temple in Fairfax Station will offer a Buddhist perspective.

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Next deadline: Thu. March 11, 4:30

Schedule: lruc.org > About Us > eCurrents

First Friday: NASA For All Ages

Launch time is **Friday evening, March 5** at 6:30—fair weather or foul! This will be a different kind of First Friday program, open to educators, parents, and teens interested in what NASA has to offer. After a thirty-minute program by NASA, the space cadets will rocket off to more fun and games, while adults and teens may stay for a more in-depth presentation.

Parents, sign up your little astronauts online or between church services. Adults and teens interested in the second presentation (7:30-9:00), please write firstfriday@lruc.org with the names and phone numbers of the people coming so there will be enough space and information for everyone.

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

Cutting Budgets, Cutting Care

You may be following the recent news about drastic cuts in the proposed budgets for Virginia and Fairfax County. Our Faith in the World will look at how these proposals will affect local human services programs.

On **Sunday, March 21**, community activist Marlene Blum will lead a discussion on the effects of Fairfax County's budget cuts. A founder and past president of the Fairfax Alliance for Human Services, Marlene is an expert on the Fairfax County budget process. Then, on **Sunday, April 11**, Delegate Vivian Watts and community advocate John Jorejsi will help us understand what cuts in the state budget will mean. Delegate Watts, who has represented the 39th District for all but six years since 1982, is former director of a non-profit serving hundreds of children in abuse and neglect cases. John, no stranger to our adult education program, is the founder of Social Action Linking Together and a tireless advocate for social justice programs in Virginia.

Both sessions start at 11:00. Why not invite a friend?

Soccer Trip, Gifts to South Africa

The US Youth Soccer League ran a "Diski Your Way to South Africa" contest for teams age 8-14 across the US. Kayla Morrison's team, 97 Fusion, won the contest and will be flying to South Africa! Local TV and Voice of America are already on the story.

Diski, a dance based on South Africa's uniquely rhythmic soccer moves, has developed to show excitement about the World Cup being there this summer, their devotion to soccer, and the rhythm of the country. Kayla's team won after choreographing their own dance, learning it in fifteen-second intervals, and practicing, practicing.

The team and escorts—including Ian Morrison and hopefully Roger—leave for South Africa on Saturday, March 27 for a week of events including a safari, soccer in one of the World Cup stadiums, and marvelous programs in the Johannesburg and Cape Town areas.

The team wanted to do something concrete to show thanks for this incredible opportunity. They are organizing a soccer clothes and equipment drive and are asking for donations of new, or gently used cleats, socks, shin guards, uniforms, balls, and the like to take with them. Chantilly Youth Soccer Association is donating 100 complete soccer kits. 97 Fusion is asking other leagues, teams, families, and friends to help. Let your old equipment do some good!

The team needs all donations by **Thursday, March 25**. Give them to Peggy Morrison ([rnpmorrisson \[at\] verizon \[dot\] net](mailto:rnpmorrisson@verizon.net)), or contact her to arrange for a pickup. And visit www.learn todiski.com to find out more about the contest and see 97 Fusion's winning video.

Safe Church Form for Volunteers

In accordance with our newly adopted Safe Church Policy, volunteers who work with children and youth need to comply annually with Safe Church procedures. They must complete a simple one-page self-disclosure form and sign an acceptance of the Policy.

Self-disclosure forms and copies of the policy will be available between services on **Sundays March 7, 14, and 21**. Members of the Safe Space Committee will be present to answer any questions. The form and policy are also posted on www.lrucc.org: follow the Schedules-Procedures-Policies link at the bottom of the home page.

If you are a First Friday volunteer, a church school teacher, a youth group volunteer, or a Welcome Center volunteer, or if you have an interest in becoming a new volunteer or teacher, please make sure to sign your paperwork by **March 21**.

Fellowship, Flowers, and Jane!

Sunday, April 11 is the date to gather for a flower-themed coffee hour in honor of Jane Hustvedt. With her exceptional skill and creativity, Jane has graciously arranged flowers for our sanctuary and around the church since long before we had a building, starting with our very first worship on September 9, 1954. (For that service First Congregational gave us \$25 for flowers—which Jane made last until Christmas!)

Now it's time for us to say "Thank you" as well as "Happy birthday"—she turns 91 on April 9!

But that's not all. We can make this especially festive and fun if we all *wear flowers*. Don't have a floral blouse or necktie? Find that old hat and add a few flowers to the brim. You trashed that hat long ago? Pick up a plastic daisy and add it to your baseball cap. Uncomfortable in a hat? Pin a few blossoms from your begonia to your lapel. Or grab that rhinestone rose from the back of your drawer and add it to your sweater. A young person in your family could even help you with paste-on flower tattoos.

If we all wear flowers on April 11 then—*voilà!*—we'll have a fellowship hall full of posies honoring our very own perennial bloom!

New Directory Available Soon

The new edition of our church directory is due to be published this week. Expect to pick up a copy for your household starting **Sunday, March 7**. If you are unable to come to church and no one can pick yours up, please contact the church office.



Meet Our Newest Members

Little River welcomed ten friends into full membership on February 14. Pick up a printed copy of *Currents* to read introductions. Welcome to all!

Taking “Stock” of Your Giving

Using appreciated securities (stocks, bonds or mutual funds which are worth more now than when you purchased them) to fund a charitable gift can have considerable tax advantages. Either by giving either an outright gift to Little River or with a planned gift, you can realize considerable tax savings. (In order to realize the tax advantages, stocks must be transferred directly to the church rather than sold).

For more information, contact a pastor, or Brian Payne, Endowment Fund Committee chair (*brianrpayne[at]verizon[dot]net*).

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, return 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.

Lenten Choral Music

At both services on Sunday, March 21 the Sanctuary Choir will sing Mozart’s Requiem Mass.

Reflections on Easter Vigil

On the evening of Saturday, April 3, Little River will hold its first Easter Vigil. In the next few issues of Currents, members of the congregation who are familiar with the Vigil will share their experience and understanding of this ancient Christian service. Following are thoughts by Chris Weakley.

When I first attended an Easter Vigil, it was done by a young Methodist pastor, who had been teaching us about the early church. We all gathered as the sun went

down in front of the church around an old hibachi grill filled with wood shavings and real charcoal. On a folding table sat a large white candle as well as two of the small taper holders we used for services. The front doors of the church were open, but it was dark inside. On Good Friday, a procession had carried a large white candle out of the church to the front doors and then turned off the lights in the church.

The pastor stood there in a plain black cassock and we were all holding candles. As the last light of the sun faded, he lit the small fire in the hibachi. He started to explain the service to the adults gathered around. Members of the youth held the various items to redecorate the altar and the pulpit-lectern in white. Once the fire was going, the pastor said the service would begin.

He stepped up to the fire that was going well and used one of the tapers to light the large white candle. Once that was lit, people lit their small candles and we began a procession into the church. By the time the service was done, the church was lit up and the altar redecorated, and we even had communion. Through the whole service, I felt somehow connected to folks who had done something like this through the ages. It made Easter seem like it had really come. It made it seem more joyful, less like an ordinary Sunday.

We did this service two years, and then the minister was moved on as is the Methodist way—but by then I was hooked. I went to Episcopal and Catholic Vigils whenever I could. There was something about those first ones that seemed to dwell more on the joy of the Resurrection than a lot of the others I have been to, but I still value the celebration of the core of what Christianity means to me.

*You are my lamp, O LORD;
the LORD turns my darkness into light.
—2 Samuel 22:29*

*The people walking in darkness have seen
a great light;
on those living in the land of the shadow
of death a light has dawned.
—Isaiah 9:2*





Links: Events, People, News

- **Calendar:** Find out about church events at 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 > About Us > eCurrents > News from the UCC.
- **Currents by e-mail:** See the *Currents* web page at 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

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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.