



Easter Vigil: How and Why . . .

A few years ago we stopped having a youth-created and -led Easter sunrise service.

For the first five years I was here, the wider community spoke favorably about looking forward to that experience. I felt the same. The practice was part of my experience too. It shaped my view of the story. In Richmond I always looked forward to sunrise over the lake in Bryan Park and Easter eggs scattered about for the children. With great anticipation we all gathered for the great breakfast that would follow at church.

But here at Little River, a problem emerged. The youth expressed disinterest in planning, implementing, and more to the point, enjoying the whole idea. Amidst the groans and complaints about the cold and no vision for creating the experience, parents were admitting that they too found it stressful to come so early and in such cold, given their over-scheduled lives.

It was obvious that the challenges of the lives of people involved outlived the Sunrise Service's ability to capture meaning. Clearly it was time to reevaluate, and the response from parents and youth was, "We don't

want to do this anymore."

So, like you, I had to let go, and the tradition stopped. I felt I had lost something, as some of you also expressed. We had nothing else to fill the sacred place of yearning for a transition time between Good Friday and Easter morning.

Then some new life came. One of the gifts people who come to us from other traditions bring is their view of the story. This year we're being offered the opportunity to experience Easter Vigil, as older traditions name it. Sam and I experienced it with a Catholic friend but I could hardly see how to translate their tradition into ours. Then with the help of Susan Blain from our UCC national staff and those in the Creating Worship group from more strongly liturgical faith practices, a relevant and meaningful way to guide us from the cross to celebration took shape. It may well fill the gap. I hope you'll give it a try.

Progressive Christianity teaches us that we can transform the old for new meaning to come alive—regardless of our past.

Peace,
Ginna

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Next deadline: Thu. March 25, 4:30

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. . . And Explained in Class

Does Ginna's column—and the articles in previous issues of *Currents*—leave you curious but unsure about our upcoming Easter Vigil? You are welcome to attend a class and question-and-answer session hosted by the Creating Worship group on **Sunday, March 21** at 9:30 or **Sunday, March 28** at 11:00. It will explain the history of the Vigil, how it is structured, what the major symbols are, and how the group has written a new Easter Vigil service for Little River.

Cutting Budgets, Cutting Care

On two Sunday mornings at 11:00, Our Faith in the World will look at how the proposed drastic cuts to the county and state budgets will affect human services programs. On **March 21** the presentation on the county impact will be led by Marlene Blum, a founder and past Chair of the Fairfax Alliance for Human Services. The **April 11** presentation on the state impact will be led by Delegate Vivian Watts and John Horesji, who is the founder of Social Action Linking Together and a tireless advocate for social justice programs in Virginia.

Holy Week and Easter Worship

Palm-Passion Sunday, March 28: The 9:30 and 11:00 services will begin on a high note as we recall Jesus's entry into Jerusalem. The mood will shift somewhat as the scripture readings and sermon explore the drama and passion of Holy Week.

Maundy Thursday, April 1: We will commemorate Jesus's last supper with the disciples with an 8:00 p.m. communion service in the round. Care will be available for children age two and under.

Good Friday, April 2: We will recall Christ's passion during a forty-minute service at 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 3: For the first time, we will observe the ancient Easter Vigil ritual, adapted in the style and manner of the Reformed tradition, at this ninety-minute 8:00 p.m. service.

Easter Sunday, April 4: Joyous worship in the sanctuary at 9:30 and 11:00 features a brass quartet. While there is no church school, care will be available during each service for children age two and under.

Book Group: *Mudbound*

Join the Women's Book Group on **Sunday, March 21** at 12:15 to discuss Hillary Jordan's first novel, *Mudbound*, winner of the 2006 Bellwether Prize for literature of social responsibility. It is a compelling tale of soldiers and their families in the Jim Crow South after World War II.

Intergenerational Mission Trip

Come **Sunday, March 21** to hear plans for a mission trip for all ages to the coal mines of southwestern Virginia. You will hear about travel, meal and project plans. Attending this meeting does not obligate you to go. We will, however, be asking for your decision to register by **Sunday, April 11** for this trip, which will take place Sunday-Thursday, **June 13-17**.

Eco-Wellness Garden

If you are interested in sustainable living, gardening, hunger, or connections between these and faithfulness, please consider being part of a conversation aimed at establishing a sample garden here at Little River to help us all learn more about such concerns. Join Ginna at 9:30 on **Tuesday, March 23**.

Spring Cleanup Day

Please join the Board of Trustees 9:00-noon on **Saturday, March 27** for a spring work day. We will

spruce up our building and grounds for Easter. Both indoor and outdoor projects are available so come, rain or shine! Bring a rake if you have one. Refreshments will be provided.

If you can't make it on the 27th and would be willing to "adopt" a project, please contact Joanna Knoll (*knollfamily1[at]cox[dot]net*).

Healing Service

The quarterly Healing Service for those who are seeking healing of body, mind, or spirit will be **Sunday, March 28** at 4:00 in the sanctuary. This informal service includes communion and the ancient rite of the laying on of hands. Speak to Verne or Ginna to learn more.

Write New "Burma-Shave" Signs!

The Evangelism Committee of the Deacons hopes that you have enjoyed the signs placed along the church 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, March 28** to the church office in care of Bunny Jones. First and second prizes: your work displayed along the driveway!

Fellowship, Flowers, and Jane!

Sunday, April 11 is the time to say "Thank you" and "Happy birthday" to Jane Hustvedt. She will turn 91 on April 9, and she has arranged our sanctuary flowers for 55 of those years—ever since our very first service!

Celebrate Jane by joining her at a special coffee hour at 10:30. Be sure to wear flowers! Live blossoms, floral-print dresses or ties, flower-themed jewelry, an extravagant plastic bouquet, stickers, anything festive or creative. Let's honor our very own perennial bloom!

Silent Auction and Dinner

The Silent Auction is coming **Saturday, April 24!** Our Junior and Senior youth will host this yearly gala to raise funds to support their summer service activities, such as the Senior PF's Habitat for Humanity project.

The theme of this year's event is "Share Your Gifts." The youth are seeking silent auction donations that share your unique talents or passions. Possibilities include homemade items, professional services, or tickets to your favorite cultural or sporting events! Pick up a donation form in the narthex, or arrange your donations with Heather Shackley (*heathermarie[at]att[dot]net*), who can answer your questions.

Celebration for the Buckleys

You are invited to a double celebration: Edith Buckley's 85th birthday and Ralph's 95th! Pick up a printed copy of *Currents* for details.

Two New Association Churches

The Central Atlantic Conference received two churches into the UCC on February 27, when Covenant Baptist Church in Washington and United Christian Church in Lexington Park, Maryland, were granted congregational standing by the Potomac Association.

Covenant Baptist is known throughout the area for its vibrant worshipping community and its prophetic ministries of justice and service. Founded in 1945 as an all-white Southern Baptist congregation, it began a racial transition in 1969 when it called an African-American pastor. Now predominantly African-American, the congregation has a reputation as a beacon of hope, inclusiveness, and liberation in Southeast Washington. Last year, senior pastors Dennis and Christine Wiley were among the leaders who visibly supported the District's same-sex marriage law.

United Christian Church is an ecumenical partnership of the UCC and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Formerly known as Southern Maryland Faith Community, it is committed to inclusiveness, service, and speaking to all the needs of those it serves.

A service of reception for United Christian Church will be held at Bethany Christian Church, Fort Washington, Maryland, on Palm Sunday, March 28. A service welcoming Covenant Baptist will take place May 16.

—Adapted from an article by J. Bennett Guess in *United Church News*, February 28, 2010.

Conference Annual Meeting

The 46th Annual Meeting of the UCC's Central Atlantic Conference will be held **Friday-Sunday, June 11-13** at the University of Delaware. The keynote speaker will be the Rev. Diana Butler Bass, author of *Christianity for the Rest of Us*. The theme is "Who are you Christians anyway? Seeking our way in the Central Atlantic Conference." Look for registration information at www.cacucc.org starting around **March 15**.

Celebrating Ginna's Ministry

Each of you is important in celebrating the meaningful ministry of Ginna Minasian Dalton. On **June 27**, her final Sunday at Little River, we will honor Ginna following worship at an all-church potluck brunch and a lively program in the social hall with Jean Wheelock as our MC. Plan to be there! Some plans are already in

place, but co-chairs Shirley Bloomquist, Dee Cardiff and Dee Collins welcome additional ideas.

"Faith Practices"

The United Church of Christ has developed "Faith Practices," an online community of resources for all ages to support the life of the church. In the fall the Church school will use this material. Between now and June *Currents* will include articles about the material and what this can mean for the church. Please check it out at www.faithpractices.org.

For now, take a moment to reflect on what you think of when you hear the phrase "faith practices." What images or moments in your journey come to your mind? What would you describe as a practice of faith?

New Directory Available

The new church directory is now available at church. Please take a copy for your household. If no one can pick yours up, please contact the church office.

Benevolences Budget for 2010

The Board of Missions announces Little River's benevolences budget for this year, approved by the Board on February 21.

UCC Support	
Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) Basic Support	\$66,719.00
Potomac Association dues	8,000.00
Additional Support	
Domestic: meeting basic needs	
For Immediate Sympathetic Help (FISH):	3,000.00
Food for Others	2,500.00
Thrive DC	2,000.00
Homestretch	2,000.00
Domestic: Health	
Northern Virginia AIDS Ministry (NOVAM)	2,000.00
Domestic: Support for youth	
Shaw Community Ministry:	3,000.00
Domestic: Evangelism	
Lancaster Seminary	1,000.00
United College Ministries	2,000.00
International Outreach	
Nazaneen Education and Health Center	1,000.00
Missionary Support (Dr. Anil Henry, Mungeli Christian Hospital, India)	2,500.00
Ad-Hoc Special Mission Projects	403.00
TOTAL BENEVOLENCES	\$96,122.00



Web Site "Treasure Trove"

Have you noticed the link at the bottom of each page of our Web site? Go to www.lrucc.org and click on "Schedules, Procedures & Policies"—you'll find a treasure trove of information: from the worship planning calendar to the church school schedule, from coffee hour procedures to our constitution and bylaws. And more. Check it out!

Easter Flowers

You are invited to place Easter flowers in the sanctuary on Easter Sunday, April 4, in honor or in memory of a loved one. The deadline for ordering is Sunday, March 21.

No. of white Easter lilies: _____ (\$10 each) No. of yellow tulips: _____ (\$10 each)
No. of white hyacinths: _____ (\$10 each) No. of yellow daffodils: _____ (\$10 each)
No. of white tulips: _____ (\$10 each) No. of purple tulips: _____ (\$10 each)

TOTAL COST: \$ _____

Your name _____ Phone _____

I/we wish to dedicate these flowers (please mark one choice for each blank used):

in (honor / memory) of: _____

in (honor / memory) of: _____

in (honor / memory) of: _____

I will pick up the flowers after the 11:00 service on Easter: (Yes / No)

*Send form and payment to church office or place in offering plate.
Make check payable to Little River UCC, memo: Flower Fund.*

If you have any questions, call Jane Hustvedt.



LITTLE RIVER



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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@lrucc.org.

LITTLE RIVER UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

~ *welcoming diversity, independent
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@lrucc.org). Submit notices 3 weeks ahead of events if possible.