

MARCH 2014

BETHEL UCC beacon

worship

MARCH 2

Wounded Healers
Exodus 16:1-31
Rev. Kristen Curlee

MARCH 9

Into Temptation
Matthew 4:1-11
Rev. Carolyn Richar

MARCH 16

Born from Above
John 3:1-17
Rev. Kristen Curlee

MARCH 23

Living Water
John 4:5-42
Rev. Kristen Curlee

MARCH 30

God's Work Revealed
John 9:1-41
Rev. Kristen Curlee

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

**10 a.m. Worship
& Sunday School
11 a.m. Fellowship**

Life Saving

BY PASTOR KRISTEN CURLEE



The season of Lent is upon us. This is a time of confession and penitence when we cleanse our hearts, seek forgiveness and strive for reconciliation in our lives as we journey to the cross with Jesus. Many in the Christian tradition “give something up” during Lent or add a spiritual practice to their daily routine with the hope of being more in tune with the Divine. There are many spiritual practices to consider as we ponder connecting with God. Prayer, Bible study, sacred music, fasting, alms giving are a few among many. But how do we choose? How do we discern what will nurture our relationship with the Holy?

In her book *An Altar in the World*, Barbara Brown Taylor talks about spiritual practices being those things that “save our life.” She writes, “All I had to do was figure out what my life depends on. All I had to figure out was how I stayed as close to that reality as I could.” Taylor continues, “What is saving my life now is the conviction that there is no spiritual treasure to be found apart from the bodily experience of human life on earth. My life depends on engaging the most ordinary physical activities with the most exquisite attention I can give them.” She is being saved by finding the sacred in the activities of ordinary daily living. What is saving your life? Could you use more lifesaving tools in your tool box?

One of the ancient traditional Lenten practices that connects people with God is fasting. Fasting takes many forms. In its extreme, it can be diet of clear liquids for a few days. Alternatively, it is not eating from sun up to sun down. Or sometimes it is much less extreme and really less a fast and more a simplification of one’s diet such as giving up meat or sweets. The practice of fasting, in its variety of forms extends into our faith history before the time of Jesus.

(continued on page 2)

BETHEL UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

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vision & mission

Our vision is:

To receive and share Jesus' message of extravagant love through compassionate care for our community and the world.

This vision inspires us to be a church of mission where we seek to:

- 1 Know God and one another and open ourselves to be known.**
- 2 Be a church where people are comforted, encouraged, and challenged by God's Word.**
- 3 Serve as God's hands of mercy, affirming justice and peace in the world.**
- 4 Welcome and celebrate the diversity of people and thought, encouraging each individual's relationship with Christ.**

Life Saving CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

By its very nature, fasting seems to suggest that something is wrong. Eating is a normal part of human existence, so abstaining from eating implies a disruption in the very rhythm of life. But in the ancient Israelite communities fasting and abstinence from food was a practice to point to something even more necessary for life, something more important than food—communion with and dependence on God. In his doctorate dissertation on fasting, Kent D. Berghuis writes, “Fasting behaviors were sometimes commanded, sometimes voluntary, and sometimes even ritualized, but the Hebrew Bible rather consistently portrays fasting in conjunction with themes of disruption and restoration. In the midst of disruption, fasting comes to symbolize hope. Through repentance and prayer, fasting can signify the centering of the self in humility, the renewal of the relationship to God’s sustaining force. As such, fasting takes on a dual significance of mourning and hope.”

For some among us hope amidst the mourning is what our life depends on. For those of us seeking to know that hope more fully, fasting may be a practice to consider. For others among us practices of confession, prayer or music might more fully connect us to our deep need—our life saver.

Each Wednesday during Lent we will gather at 6:00 p.m. for a light dinner of soup then move to the sanctuary at 7:00 for a Lenten worship where we will explore some other sacred practices (see page 3). As we begin our quest to discover what our lives depend on and seek to stay close to that reality may we all be courageous enough to try something new. It could be that in trying something new we discover a practice that over time saves our life.

Every member of Bethel are the ministers



Head Usher for March
Laura Wells

staff & leadership

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Rev. Kristen Curlee
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Interim Pastor Emeritus
Rev. Dr. H. Donald Smith

Wednesday Evenings during Lent–March 2014

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on the first Wednesday in March, the 5th. Each Wednesday during March, come for a light dinner of soup at 6 p.m., then we move to the sanctuary at 7 p.m. for a special Lenten worship where we will explore various sacred practices.

The March schedule is as follows:

- March 5 - Ash Wednesday service of confession and imposition of ashes
- March 12 - Confession (Matthew 5:43-48)
- March 19 - Lectio Divino (Psalms 121, 32, 95 and 23)
- March 26 - Giving (Matthew 6:1-4)



Looking ahead to Holy Week in April, Bethel will hold special services on Maundy Thursday (6 p.m. on April 17) and on Good Friday. The Good Friday service (at 7 p.m.) will be a community ecumenical service to be held here at Bethel with members of other nearby churches invited. If you would like to sing in the Community Choir for this service, please arrive at 6 p.m. for a rehearsal.

EASTER EGG HUNT HELP NEEDED

On Easter Sunday (April 20) we will hold our 3rd annual Easter Egg Hunt. After the morning's worship service, children of all ages will hunt for plastic eggs filled with stickers. All eggs will be turned in for a goodie bag filled with treats.

Weather permitting the hunt will be held outside on the playground or if it is raining inside in the Sunday School rooms. All are welcome to participate.

Please contact Janna Lipman if you are interested in helping stuff Easter eggs and/or hiding the eggs on Easter Sunday prior to worship.



Cereal Drive Making Tremendous Progress

Bethel collected 63 boxes of cereal for Arlington Food Assistance Center during February—more than *double* the pace of one box a day to meet our 2014 goal of donating 365 boxes.

Members and friends continued to donate other needed foods as well; a total of 107 pounds of groceries—including the cereal—was dropped off at AFAC.

Thank you to everyone for making February so fabulous—a month of tremendous generosity. After just two months, our cereal total stands at 95 boxes!



Spotlight on Our Children



Photos by Art Lipman

Above: A “cartoon” drawn by Fiona inspired by a passage from I Corinthians.

Top right: The children’s table at Fellowship Time is always a popular spot for kids as well as adults—and not always just parents.

Middle right: Dorothy and Tamyra enjoy a book together prior to worship.

Bottom right: Children’s time during worship is always special for all congregants.



March Toiletry Drive for RPC

BY DOROTHY LAWRENCE AND BILL GRAVER

Join Bethel's Toiletry Drive for Arlington's Residential Program Center during the month of March.

This drive is focused on helping to answer RPC clients' needs for bath soap, shampoo, toothpaste, tooth-

brushes, and hand/body lotion sundries in regular sizes. We also will accept personal-sized items, as are sometimes provided free to hotel guests.

Please place your donations in the box next to the Sanctuary doors any Sunday in March. Please note that we can only pass items to RPC which are unopened and sealed originally.

Dates for sorting donations and filling welcome bags for RPC clients will be announced later.

The Volunteers of America Chesapeake's Residential Program Center provides three crucial services—non-medical detoxification, substance abuse recovery and homeless services for single adults—all under one roof. RPC serves over 400 people each year.

For more information, visit: www.voachesapeake.org/Services/Homeless-Services/Residential-Program-Center.

Joining to help others in need reaffirms that we all are one...in God's family.



Please join the
Virginia Bronze Handbell Ensemble
For their spring performance
Luck of the Irish
Sunday, March 16
at 4:00 PM

George Washington Masonic Memorial Theater
101 Callahan Dr, Alexandria, VA

Carol Feather Martin,
Artistic Director

We tip our hat to the wearin' o' the green with this program of Irish music to get your toes tapping. Join us for many of your favorites, including *Ballad of Siobhan ni Laoghaire* and *Brian Boru*, as well as *Firedance* from the acclaimed stage celebration of Irish music, song, and dance, *Riverdance*.

Adult \$10
Senior \$ 8
Student \$ 5
Family \$20



Special Offer
Bring this email to the concert for a discount: Buy one adult ticket, get 50% off the second adult ticket!




FUN AND FELLOWSHIP FOR ALL AGES

St. Patrick's Day Game Night

SATURDAY, MARCH 15 | 5:30-7:30 PM

March 2014 at Bethel UCC

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
						1
2 10 a.m. Worship/ Communion & Sunday School 11 a.m. Fellowship	3	4	5 6 p.m. Light dinner (soup and bread) 7 p.m. Ash Wednesday Service of confession and imposition of ashes	6	7	8
9 10 a.m. Worship & Sunday School 11 a.m. Fellowship 11:30 a.m. Social Concerns Committee meeting (Library)	10	11	12 6 p.m. Light dinner (soup and bread) 7 p.m. "Sacred Practices" Service	13	14	15 5:30 p.m. St. Pat- rick's Game Night
16 10 a.m. Worship & Sunday School 11 a.m. Fellowship 11:30 a.m. Consistory meeting	17	18	19 6 p.m. Light dinner (soup and bread) 7 p.m. "Sacred Practices" Service	20 12 noon Third Thursday Lunch in the Library	21	22
23 10 a.m. Worship & Sunday School 11 a.m. Fellowship	24	25	26 6 p.m. Light dinner (soup and bread) 7 p.m. "Sacred Practices" Service	27	28	29
30 10 a.m. Worship & Sunday School 11 a.m. Fellowship	31					