

JUNE 2014

BETHEL UCC beacon

worship

JUNE 1

Eyes Towards Heaven
Acts 1:1-11
Rev. Kristen Curlee

JUNE 8

Violent Winds and Tongues of Fire
Acts 2:1-21
Rev. Kristen Curlee

JUNE 15

FATHER'S DAY
Commissioned
Matthew 28:16-20
Rev. Kristen Curlee

JUNE 22

Two Great Nations
Genesis 21:8-21
Rev. Carolyn Richar

JUNE 29

God Will Provide
Genesis 22:1-18
Rev. Kristen Curlee

SUNDAY SCHEDULE
10 a.m. Worship
& Sunday School
11 a.m. Fellowship

BETHEL UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

4347 Arlington Blvd., Arlington, VA 22203
EMAIL BethelUCCVa@verizon.net
WEB www.bethelucc-va.org

Bethel Observes Pride Month

MARRIAGE EQUALITY DOCUMENTARY TO BE SHOWN

June is Pride Month in recognition of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals and communities, and Bethel will be observing the occasion in a number of ways:

- Bethel is one of numerous faith communities joining together in the 8th annual **Northern Virginia Interfaith Pride Worship Service Thursday, June 7** at 7 p.m. at Little River UCC in Annandale.
- A number of our members will be participating with other metropolitan-area UCC congregations in the **Saturday, June 7 DC Pride Parade** in the Dupont Circle area of Northwest Washington.
- Bethel's Outreach Committee will host a screening of the acclaimed documentary *Bridegroom*, dealing with issues surrounding marriage equality, on **Sunday, June 22**, from 6 to 8 p.m.

Bridegroom is the story of two young men in a committed relationship that is cut tragically short by an accidental death; it poignantly tells how people without legal protections of marriage can find themselves completely shut out and ostracized.

A panel discussion will follow the film's screening. Panelists include:

- **Sharon Ringe**, a UCC minister and professor at Wesley Theological Seminary;
- **Phil Hicks**, former Board President of the Metro DC Chapter of PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) and current Virginia Advocacy Chair; and
- **David Farmer**, a member of Ravensworth Baptist Church in Annandale who is active in the Reformation Project, which educates Christians in supporting and affirming LGBT people.

*Reflections on
being part of
an "open and
affirming" church
(see page 3)*

Also this month: Bethel's annual STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL
(see page 2)

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.

NEW EARLIER TIME
Come for lunch!

Strawberry Festival

SATURDAY, JUNE 7
12 NOON - 4 PM



BETHEL
 UNITED CHURCH
 OF CHRIST

4347 ARLINGTON BLVD
 (ROUTE 50)
 BETWEEN GLEBE
 & GEORGE MASON



Strawberries, ice cream & shortcake
 Hot dogs, hamburgers & bake sale
 Kids' games & activities

PLUS KITTENS for adoption
 from a local rescue organization

&

**Check out a Red Cross
 EMERGENCY
 RESPONSE
 VEHICLE**



COMMUNITY YARD SALE beginning at **10 AM**
PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

Every member of Bethel are the ministers



staff & leadership

Senior Pastor
 Rev. Kristen Curlee
pastorkristencurlee@gmail.com

Associate Pastor
 Rev. Carolyn Richar
crichar@capitalhospice.org

Church President
 Whit Wheeler

Director of Music
 Angie Stevens
angielatte@gmail.com

Interim Pastor Emeritus
 Rev. Dr. H. Donald Smith



Celebrating God's Diversity of Love

BY PASTOR KRISTEN CURLEE

Bethel United Church of Christ is an Open and Affirming congregation, which means that “no matter where you are on life’s journey you are welcome here.” And we truly mean everyone; but especially we are open and affirming to members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) community, their friends and family, and those for whom church has often been a place where they were not welcome or conditionally welcomed. Many of our brothers and sisters who love differently have been hurt by the church. It is because of the history of abuse and exclusion for LGBT brothers and sisters from the church that actively welcoming is so important.

For me, as a parent of young children, being in a congregation where I know my children will hear the consistent message that God loves all people and celebrates the diversity of families is why I treasure being part of an Open and Affirming congregation.

There are many reasons and experiences that lead to people to have PRIDE in Bethel being an Open and Affirming congregation so I invited you to share your stories:

Becky Ballenger wrote:

I’m proud to be a member of Bethel UCC. I don’t really know where I should begin but I am willing to try because I know Bethel and the Lord are with me now. You see, June 23rd will be my one-year “rebirth day” due to the open and affirmative feelings I get from the Bethel community. The spark that ignited the fire within me to accept Jesus as my savior came the first day that my partner Cheryl and I met with Pastor Kristen. The fire became a blaze when I started talking with the congregation; I knew Bethel was “my place,” my true beginning of the journey.

I can’t remember a day of my life that I wasn’t “different.” I wasn’t resentful or really sad

about it. It just was. Of course I couldn’t discuss my difference with my family. Being “God fearing” people, my family always preached that certain “differences” like mine meant burning in Hell. The one good thing they told me was that you needed to “talk to God” about everything. I did. I told him everything. I waited for answers. Sometimes they came and sometimes they didn’t. It just was. I convinced myself that I didn’t need a church to speak to or find God. I mean, God is everywhere, right?

Something was missing.

It wasn’t until I joined Bethel that my eyes and ears and heart opened for the first time. My eyes opened to see that no matter who you are with all your “differences,” you’re welcome with “great” hugs and support and love. My ears were opened for the first time to hear the conviction and love that Jesus gave for so many people. My heart was opened by the strength in numbers from the congregation and the grace of the Lord not to miss my second chance. Now I can truly say “I am a foot soldier for our Lord” with the blessings of “my church family” at Bethel. Thank you for having the patience and love to walk with someone “different.”

Ralph Buglass wrote:


I confess I did not seek out an Open and Affirming church; when I first came to Bethel I didn’t even know it was a specific designation. But I soon came to view Bethel’s status as an “ONA” church to be very meaningful and important.

I already had come to sense that the United Church of Christ denomination proclaimed a far more progressive theology and general “open-ness”—open to a broader interpretation and understanding of the Bible—than Methodism, the religious setting which I was brought up in but long lapsed from.

Being “open and affirming”—with its message of not mere acceptance but total embrace and validation of others whose sexual orientation is simply not the prevailing one in society—was a clear mark of

(continued on page 4)






Community screening of the award-winning documentary

BRIDEGROOM

“poignant, enraging, and opens a window onto the issue of marriage equality”

Panel discussion with religious, lay and gay rights activists and thinkers follows

SUNDAY, JUNE 22 6-8 PM FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC



Celebrating God’s Diversity of Love (continued from page 3)

the church’s progressive values and open-mindedness. “Open and affirming,” to me, is simply a re-affirmation of God’s extravagant love of all his children.

So during June, Pride Month, I take much comfort in, and even a certain pride in, my church as one of a growing number truly living out what it means to be Christian, inviting, welcoming and accepting—*fully*—of all.

Whatever your own personal journey we can have PRIDE that all people and all voices are welcome here.

Being an Open and Affirming church means that we are a safe space for young men and women to question their sexual orientation or gender identity without fear of judgment. Being an Open and Affirming church means that we are as safe place for children of LGBT parents to grow and learn that their moms or dads are made by God, loved by God and called to share their gifts in the world just like everyone else. Being an Open and Affirming church means we celebrate God’s love in all its expressions.

SUMMER SERMON SERIES JUNE 22 THROUGH JULY 20

Imperfection: The Story of Abraham and his Children

As children we celebrate in song that we are all children of Abraham. “Father Abraham had many children – I am one of them and so are you. So let’s just praise the Lord.” The scriptures from Genesis that tell the story of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Esau remind us that God works through imperfect people and imperfect families. Join us as we explore miraculous faith amidst utter humanity.

CHURCH SCHOOL

On Sunday, June 22, we celebrate the last Sunday of church school before summer vacation and say “thank you” to our dedicated church school teachers. During summer worship children six and under are welcome in the nursery after children’s time. All other children are encouraged to stay in worship. In order to care for all our children, we need one volunteer each week to help in the nursery. A sign-up sheet is posted outside the church office.



Dr. Lissette Alfaro (left), the physician at the Lighthouse Free Clinic in El Salvador, visited Bethel May 25 to give an update on the work of the clinic, which is supported by both Bethel and La Luz, the congregation that also uses our building.

Invest in the Vision

STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH OFFERING

Each day, visions and dreams are created in the hearts of many in the United Church of Christ. Through this special offering, they can become a reality. As God calls our congregation to be “church” in new ways, your gift will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches, and develop spiritual life in our youth and young adults. Because of this offering, many more will hear the good news that “God is still speaking.”

Right here in our conference support from Strengthen the Church has had major impact. Early on December 3 a fire destroyed the century-old building that was Lazarus UCC in Lineboro, Maryland. “The church is our home, and we’ve lost that. But there is a congregation here that still loves God and wants to worship.” Said Lazarus’ pastor, the Rev. Sam Chamelin.

They also want to serve. Lazarus’ Re:Deem Food Pantry began serving the community a year ago on the third Saturday of each month. There were concerns in the community about what would happen during the holiday season because of the fire. But on the pantry’s one-year anniversary, its temporary location was stocked and open.

The outpouring of support from the surrounding Carroll County was a confirmation of the church’s impact in the community. Calls came in from every church within a 20-mile radius offering space for



worship donations and food to stock the pantry.

While the 200 members of Lazarus worship in the Lineboro fire hall, they envision a new building which could incorporate Lazarus’ still-standing exterior brick walls and soup kitchen to expand the food pantry. “The building now looks like a sign of death,” said Pastor Chamelin. “But [the food pantry] reminds us that we’re alive and well, and can still be a church.”

That’s the vision of the Strengthen the Church offering... growing churches that offer a continuing testament to our still-speaking God.

Bethel to Host Arlington Interfaith Council This Month

On Monday, June 16 at 7 p.m. Bethel will host the Arlington Interfaith Council (AIC)’s June meeting.

AIC consists of representatives from 48 Arlington faith communities and 18 Helping Hands agencies that provide direct services to people in need. Contributions from member congregations provide grants so that agencies can help the homeless, feed the hungry, assist ex-offenders and victims of domestic violence, and put supplies in the backpacks of

homeless children.

AIC’s mission is to provide tangible religious witness in the community through promotion of understanding and cooperation among member congregations and to develop and support programs to alleviate suffering and promote justice for residents of Arlington County.

The monthly meetings are an opportunity for members to learn about community issues, share strategies, get to know one another and recruit volunteers.

We are seeking help to set up, provide light refreshments and clean up following the AIC meeting June 16. If you are able to help please speak with Bill Graver or Judy Lipman, our Social Concerns co-chairs.



The family of Robert Woosley, including a new-born great niece, joined Bethel members at a hymn sing May 17 at Mary Marshall House, where Robert lived at the end of his life.

Bethel delivered 44 more boxes of cereal to Arlington Food Assistance Center in May. YEAR-TO-DATE TOTAL: 260 BOXES!

Join us for bagging at AFAC Friday, June 6.
(See the calendar on page 6 for details.)

BETHEL FINANCIAL STATISTICS AS OF APRIL 30

Year-to-Date Actual Income	\$51,704
Year-to-Date Budgeted Income	\$53,662
Year-to-Date Actual Expenses	\$49,080
Year-to-Date Budgeted Expenses	\$53,142

Summer is approaching and our thoughts are leaning toward vacations and fun-filled activities away from home. This is usually the time of year when church offering tends to be less than normal. Our financial records indicate that we are lagging on pledged donations as of the end of April.

Please consider using our online giving option to keep up those pledges and help Bethel pay its bills this summer. Visit



Bethel's website at www.BethelUCC-Va.org, or feel free to speak with Judy Norton or Sam Le with any concerns or questions.



Left: Family and friends of Kim Moeller, our student pastor for the past year, joined her for her last Sunday at Bethel May 12 in advance of her graduation from Wesley Seminary the next day.



Right: Soprano Rebecca Henry (below) treated the congregation to special offertory music May 18. Guest singer Liz Dutton will be with us June 22.

Please join the

VIRGINIA BRONZE

COMMUNITY HANDBELL ENSEMBLE

For their summer performance:

Sunday, June 1
at 4:00 PM

And All That Jazz

Carol Feather Martin,
Artistic Director

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

Feel the groove with jazz hits from the 1910s through the '90s. There will be something for music lovers of all ages... Catch the rhythm and keep the beat!

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



Tickets available at the door or by visiting
www.vabronze.org

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



June 2014 at Bethel UCC

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
1 10 a.m. Worship/ Communion & Sunday School 11 a.m. Fellowship 11:30 a.m. Con- sistory (Library)	2	3	4 7 p.m. Bible Study (Library)	5 7 p.m. 8th Annual Northern Virginia Interfaith Pride Worship Service (Little River UCC, 8410 Little River Turnpike, Annan- dale)	6 7 p.m. Bagging at AFAC , 2708 S. Nelson St. Optional: meet for dinner at 6 p.m. (Boston Market on Columbia Pike)	7 10 a.m. Church Yard Sale 12-4p.m. Straw- berry Festival (NEW EARLIER TIME— <i>come for lunch!</i>)
8 10 a.m. Worship & Sunday School 11 a.m. Fellowship	9	10	11 7 p.m. Bible Study (Library)	12	13	14
15 10 a.m. Worship & Sunday School 11 a.m. Fellowship	16 7 p.m. Arlington Interfaith Council Monthly Meeting (hosted at Bethel)	17	18 7 p.m. Bible Study (Library)	19 12 noon Third Thursday Lunch (Library)	20	21
22 10 a.m. Worship & Sunday School 11 a.m. Fellowship 6-8 p.m. <i>Bride- groom</i> documentary screening and panel discussion	23	24	25	26	27	28
29 10 a.m. Worship 11 a.m. Fellowship	30					<div> Head Usher for June Jean Rentch </div>