

JULY / AUGUST 2014

BETHEL UCC beacon

worship

JULY 6

Being God's Servant
Genesis 24:34-67
Rev. Carolyn Richar

JULY 13

Loving Jacob
Genesis 25:19-34
Rev. Kristen Curlee

JULY 20

A Place Called Bethel
Genesis 28:10-19
Rev. Kristen Curlee

JULY 27

Guest Preacher
Mr. Tom Russell

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

**10 a.m. Worship
& Nursery Care**
11 a.m. Fellowship

AUGUST SCHEDULE

See page 3



A Community that Prays Together

BY PASTOR KRISTEN CURLEE

June marked the end of the programmatic year at Bethel UCC and we celebrated all the gifts that each member brings. In Paul's words, "there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." We celebrated the gifts of worship in communion servers, choir members, ushers, acolytes, and scripture readers. We celebrated the gifts of faith formation in Bible Study participants and church school teachers. We celebrated the gifts of leadership in our committee and consistory members. We celebrated the gifts of our evangelists in their marketing, outreach and publicity. We celebrated all the people and the unique gifts we each bring; but there is one gift that feeds and nurtures our church community—the gift of prayer.

My New Testament professor, Greg Carey, taught a class on the practice of prayer and above all else what he wanted everyone who took the class to know is that there is no wrong way to pray. The only wrong way to pray is not to. Pray often. When sitting with your eyes closed and hands folded does not feel right know that's okay and find another way to pray. A colleague suggested writing the names of the ones you want to lift in prayer and taking them with you. Maybe it is setting those names under the bushes as you weed the flower beds. Maybe it's laying those names on the back of the stove as you cook dinner. Or maybe it is setting

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BETHEL UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

4347 Arlington Blvd., Arlington, VA 22203

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WEB www.bethelucc-va.org

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.**

AFAC Needs Our Help

The 2009 Recovery Act's temporary boost in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits expired on November 1, 2013. Families of four saw as much as \$36 a month cut from their checks by the end of 2013. For our community this means that more people cannot afford to feed their families and need our help.

In September of 2013 when we gathered to see the documentary film *A Place at the Table* Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) was serving 1,452 families a week. Last month, when Arlington Interfaith Council met at Bethel, Charlie Meng, Executive Director of AFAC, reported that since SNAP was reduced, AFAC is now serving 2,007 families. Without additional support, the nonprofit expects to exceed its \$700,000 food purchase budget this year by \$150,000.

The needs are growing. How can we respond?



Bethel volunteers bagged rice for Arlington Food Assistance Center last month, and will do so again on Friday, August 1 at 7 p.m. Meet for dinner (optional) beforehand at 6 p.m. at Boston Market on Columbia Pike.

Every member of Bethel are the ministers



staff & leadership

Senior Pastor
Rev. Kristen Curlee
pastorkristencurlee@gmail.com

Associate Pastor
Rev. Carolyn Richar
cricar@capitalhospice.org

Church President
Whit Wheeler

Director of Music
Angie Stevens
angielatte@gmail.com

Interim Pastor Emeritus
Rev. Dr. H. Donald Smith

You're
invited...

All Are Welcome

African American Spiritual

Wade in the Water

Summer Community Worship

Three Arlington churches are worshiping together in August ... why not *YOU*, too?

AUGUST 3 10:30 AM

Worship at **Bethel United Church of Christ**
4347 Arlington Blvd (Rt 50 westbound)

AUGUST 10 10:30 AM

Worship at **Arlington Church of the Brethren**
300 North Montague St (3 blocks north of Rt 50)

AUGUST 17 10:30 AM

Worship at **Arlington Forest United Methodist Church**
4701 Arlington Blvd (Rt 50 westbound)

AUGUST 24 10:30 AM

Worship at **Lubber Run Park Amphitheater**
North Columbus St & North 2nd St (2 blocks north of Rt 50)
Join us for a potluck picnic in the park following worship

Join us for this

SPECIAL

month of Sundays

Children welcome during worship
Nursery care provided

FINANCE CORNER

Did you ever wonder what happens to your weekly or monthly offering? In the coming months the Finance Team will try to inform you of various aspects of church finances. This month we are focusing on general funds that go to organizations that don't fall under Social Concerns benevolences. Some of these are contributions based on our membership and others on how we are called. Bethel gives \$3,000 a year to the UCC via the Central Atlantic Conference. We are assessed approximately \$800 for the Potomac Association, and we write a check of approximately \$100 to the Arlington Interfaith Council. Our membership is approximately 55 so averaged out this means that \$70 of each person's annual contribution is going to other good causes.

May Finance Report

Budgeted Income:	\$66,552
Actual Income:	\$63,473
Budgeted Expenses:	\$67,367
Actual Expenses:	\$59,924

From the Pastor

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the names in the middle of the room as the children dance all around them.

This summer I'd like to encourage everyone to pray for someone each week. Maybe it's a name or two from our prayer list or someone else in your life who is struggling. Keep that name or those names with you for the week. You can do it alone or with your partner or children. It does not matter how you do it—just that you do it often. My hope for us as we live into this practice of prayer this summer is that we will become more connected with one another and the living God.

Social Concerns Committee Announcements

HIGHLIGHTING ARLINGTON THRIVE DURING JULY

Arlington Thrive is a not-for-profit organization that provides same-day emergency funds to help Arlington residents who are unable to pay their bills due to emergency circumstances. Funds are used to pay rent (preventing eviction and homelessness), utilities, medical and dental care, prescriptions, transportation and clothing for jobs. Self-referrals are not accepted; a social worker must make the request on behalf of persons in need.

Bethel's Social Concerns Committee has selected Arlington Thrive as the recipient of special offerings each Sunday in July; donations of any amount are welcome. Pastor Kristen often has individuals stopping by her office seeking financial help when in a crisis. She has referred many of these individuals to Thrive.



In 2013 Arlington Thrive provided over \$800,000 in direct emergency financial assistance to over 5,400 individuals including 1,945 children. Thrive prevented the eviction of 630 households; most of these were families with children. Formerly named AMEN, Thrive has been helping Arlingtonians in need of emergency financial assistance since 1975.

Another way to help Thrive is to volunteer to answer calls from social workers during one four-hour shift a month 1-5 p.m. any weekday. If you are interested in learning more about volunteering at Thrive, email info@arlingtonthrive.org.

For more information about Arlington Thrive check their website: www.arlingtonthrive.org.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL SUPPLIES NEEDED

Economically disadvantaged students experience many challenges and obstacles in their journey to succeed. Children cannot reach their full potential in school if they lack the necessary tools to learn. Again this year, Bethel will be collecting backpacks and school supplies for students living in Whitefield Commons just a few blocks from Bethel.

The most critical need is for book bags, backpacks, and roller book bags for students in first through fifth grades. Based upon student needs



and teacher requests, each needy child receives a bag that includes some or all of the following: composition books, wide-ruled loose leaf paper, rulers (both standard and metric), yellow highlighters, no. 2 pencils, ballpoint pens (blue, black, red), crayons, colored pencils, children's scissors, glue sticks and pocket folders. You can help children succeed by donating book bags and supplies. A box will be outside the church offices July 20-August 17 for donations of book bags and school supplies. Thank you!

The Social Concerns Committee extends thanks for continued support for the following. (Totals are from January through June).

- * **Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC):**
\$95 + 295 boxes of cereal & other non-perishable items
- * **Arlington Academy of Hope (AAH), Uganda:**
\$220 + children's offering of \$134.53
- * **Lighthouse Clinic, El Salvador:** \$2,675
- * **Rappaport Scholarship:** \$218

*Indicates ongoing collections throughout the year.

Shaw Community Ministry summer camper-ships: \$185

Arlington Thrive: \$20

Residential Program Center (RPC): More than 200 hygiene items collected in March

One Great Hour of Sharing (UCC): \$728

Strengthen the Church (UCC): \$230

A Stunning Strawberry Festival!



A great turnout, Red Cross participation, beautiful weather, yard sale, kittens and, of course, food, fun and fellowship made last month's annual Strawberry Festival one of the best ever, netting approximately \$1,000.



Photos by Art Lipman

MARRIAGE EQUALITY DISCUSSION BEGINS

Bethel began a process of “listening and consideration” regarding marriage equality with the screening of the documentary *Bridegroom* and a panel discussion June 22. The process continues during July with two sessions scheduled to hear all voices within our church on the issue: the first will be on Sunday, July 20 at 11:30 a.m. and the other on Wednesday, July 20 at 7 p.m. Anyone who is unable to either of these listening sessions and has something he or she is called to share can contact Pastor Kristen or Lisa Peterson, who has agreed to lead this process.



Central Atlantic Conference Annual Meeting Report

The Central Atlantic Conference (CAC) of the United Church of Christ met for its 50th Conference Annual meeting at the University of Delaware June 13-15. Our own Ralph Buglass created the anniversary logo giving life to our theme “Celebrating the Past: Envisioning the Future.”

In addition to the regular business of budgets, reports and nominations, the assembly of delegates voted on the following:

- Resolution to change the Racially Demeaning Name of the Washington National Football League Team
- Resolution of Witness Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
- Dismantling the New Jim Crow

Each of these resolutions passed unanimously or with an overwhelming majority by voice vote.

“Resolution to change the Racially Demeaning Name of the



Washington National Football League Team” recognizes that the team’s name uses language that is a stereotype which degrades Native Americans. It calls on the churches of the Central Atlantic Conference and its members to join in a boycott of games and logo sports paraphernalia for the team. It also encourages support of the Oneida Indian “Change the Mascot” campaign. Ray Halbritter, a member of the Oneida tribe, spoke in favor of

the resolution. He shared his own story of growing up with these images and their impact on his understanding of his native culture as devalued. As we were discussing this resolution one of the images that the “Change the Mascot” campaign used was of a native headdress next to a soldier’s uniform covered with medals, including a purple heart. They explained that these images are parallel. When we think about the honor that we, rightly, hold for soldiers and their sacrifice, imagine how hurtful it would be for soldiers and their families if a mascot started parading around in a purple heart and it became a symbol of a game instead of the sacrifice it should symbolize. In essence this is a part of what many Native Americans experience when they see mascots and fans donning headdresses.

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Conference Report *(continued from page 6)*

“Resolution of Witness Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” addresses the concerns about the increasingly tense relationships in Israel and Palestine. It examines the power dynamics between Israel and Palestine. The core of the resolution is to divest from and boycott companies that profit from the occupation of Palestinian Territories by Israel. Specifically it calls upon the churches of the Central Atlantic Conference and its members to divest any holding in companies that make a profit from the occupation of the Palestinian Territories by the state of Israel including, but not limited to, Caterpillar Inc, Motorola Solutions, Hewlett-Packard Development Company, G4S and Veolia Environment and to boycott any goods that are produced in the illegal settlements including but not limited to Ahava skin care, SodaStream products,

and Hadiklaim dates. It calls on CAC churches and members to study the *Kairos Palestine* document written by Palestinian Christians calling for a peaceful future. Finally, it challenges the CAC churches to engage Congress encouraging them to follow laws already on the books that protect human rights when they are considering aid packages to Israel.

This resolution had a lot of conversation, especially in the Friday afternoon workshop that spoke to how this will impact our relationship with our Jewish brothers and sisters. The writers and core supporters of this resolution worked diligently to build bridges of communication with Jewish organizations and encourage the wider church to continue this trajectory. No one spoke against this resolution, though there were a few “no” votes when the final vote was taken.

It passed with a majority.

The resolution “Dismantling the New Jim Crow” recognizes that the overwhelming majority of prison inmates detained for drug offenses are African American. This is an injustice because research affirms that the rates of drug abuse across racial lines are the same, yet men of color comprise 66 percent of people in prison for using drugs. This is creating a large group of second-class citizens. These men released from incarceration are unable to vote, struggle to find work due to their record, are unable to get federal loans to continue their education and do not qualify for any federal assistance. The men who do time are affected, but more than that, the families and whole communities where almost a whole generation will serve time are impacted.

This resolution calls on the churches of the Central Atlantic Conference and their members to demand an end to the War on Drugs so that drug use offenses are decriminalized. It asks that we educate ourselves about what is happening in our prisons and its impact on communities. It invites conversation about how this rate of incarceration impacts jobs, voter rights, public housing and education and food assistance. This is a call to educate ourselves and take action to bring change so that we have stronger communities for all people.

Copies of all three resolutions are available on the CAC website at <http://cacucc.org/pages/detail/2472>. Please speak with Pastor Kristen or Bill Graver with questions about the meeting.



Bethel's marchers at the Capital Pride parade June 7.

July 2014 at Bethel UCC

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6 10 a.m. Worship/ Communion 11 a.m. Fellowship	7	8	9	10	11	12
13 10 a.m. Worship 11 a.m. Fellowship	14	15	16	17 12 noon Third Thursday Lunch (Library)	18	19
20 10 a.m. Worship 11 a.m. Fellowship 11:30 a.m. Listen- ing Session on Mar- riage Equality (Library)	21	22	23	24	25	26
27 10 a.m. Worship 11 a.m. Fellowship	28	29	30 7 p.m. Listening Session on Mar- riage Equality (Library)	31	<div> Head Usher for July Lisa Peterson </div>	

August 2014 at Bethel UCC

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
First Four Sundays in August: Bethel joins with Arlington Church of the Brethren and Arlington Forest United Methodist Church for SUMMER COMMUNITY WORSHIP Note 10:30 start time; locations vary each Sunday					1 7 p.m. Bagging at AFAC, 2708 S. Nelson St. Optional: meet for dinner at 6 p.m. (Boston Market on Columbia Pike)	2
3 10:30 a.m. Community Worship/Communion (at Bethel) 11:30 a.m. Fellowship 12 p.m. Music & Worship Committee meeting (Library)	4	5	6 7 p.m. Consistory meeting (Library)	7	8	9
10 10:30 a.m. Community Worship (at Arlington Church of the Brethren) 11:30 a.m. Fellowship	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 10:30 a.m. Community Worship (at Arlington Forest United Methodist Church) 11:30 a.m. Fellowship	18	19	20	21 12 noon Third Thursday Lunch (Library)	22	23
24 10:30 a.m. Community Worship (at Lubber Run Park Amphitheater) 11:30 a.m. Potluck Picnic in the Park	25	26	27	28	29	30 All-Church Picnic (at Pastor Kristen's home) - watch for an email invitation
31 10 a.m. Worship 11 a.m. Fellowship 11:30 a.m. Social Concerns Committee meeting (Library)					Head Usher for August Laura Wells	