

SEPTEMBER 2014

BETHEL UCC beacon

worship

SEPTEMBER 7

Remember, Restore, Renew
Exodus 12:1-14
Rev. Kristen Curlee

SEPTEMBER 14

Road to Freedom
Exodus 14:19-31
Rev. Kristen Curlee

SEPTEMBER 21

Tensions in the Wilderness
Exodus 16:2-15
Rev. Kristen Curlee

SEPTEMBER 28

God's Sustaining Presence
Exodus 17:1-17
Rev. Carolyn Richar

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

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



Faith in a Broken World

BY PASTOR KRISTEN CURLEE

We live in a hurting world; a world filled with violence, pain, suffering and injustice. If we forgot this fact as we enjoyed vacation with family and friends, time on the beach or pool, a hot dog at the fair or a good book on a quite summer afternoon, we were sure to remember when we saw the news. This summer's news was filled with stories that remind us we live in a broken world. A Malaysian Airlines Boeing 777 exploded over insurgent-held east Ukraine on July 17, killing all 298 on board. As Israeli ground troops withdrew from the Gaza strip some 2,000 people, mostly Palestinian, lay dead. As the largest known Ebola outbreak continues to spread, the World Health Organization expects that more than 20,000 people could be afflicted. An 18 year old unarmed black man was shot six times by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, leading to sometimes violent demonstrations in the black community. The list is long. We live in a broken world.

As we look toward a new programmatic year at Bethel, we recognize that our faith does not exist in a bubble. It exists in the reality of our surrounding broken world and our deep yearning to find answers to questions like: Why does God allow suffering? How can people of faith respond to violence with violence? How does God call us to respond to injustice in our world?

In worship we will not shy away for the challenges and hard parts of life or scripture, but rather seek God in the midst of the full human experience. This fall you will notice that the worship elements continues to change from week to week as we seek meaning and deeper relationships with one another and the living God.

As we walk side by side on our journey of faith we engage in faith formation programs that deepen our wisdom of the risen Christ. Through our partnership with Arlington Forest UMC and Arlington Church of

(continued on page 2)

BETHEL UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

4347 Arlington Blvd., Arlington, VA 22203

EMAIL BethelUCCVa@verizon.net

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.**

From the Pastor *(continued from page 1)*

the Brethren we are offering more faith formation opportunities this fall than ever before:

- ▶ **"Christianity and Islam: So Much In Common, So Far Apart."** This 6-week course, starting September 7th on Sunday afternoons, 12:30 pm at Arlington Forest United Methodist Church, 4701 Arlington Blvd., is a brief study aimed at showing the primary similarities and differences between us in the hope that greater understanding of the two faiths will foster greater tolerance and love in a hurting world. (See page 3).
- ▶ **"The Book of Revelation: Not to Be Left Behind?"** will be held at Bethel and Arlington Church of the Brethren on Fridays Oct. 17th, Oct. 24th and Nov. 7th from 6 to 8:30 pm, starting with a dinner for all ages. Child care will be offered during the class. This class explores the Book of Revelation's role as it evaluated the political and social culture of John's time and challenges us today to speak truths to power.

Weekly Wednesday Bible Study here at Bethel resumes September 17th as we explore the book of Exodus and Moses' leadership through the wilderness. This ongoing study group is not just about the scriptures we engage, but more than that it's about the relations forged in our sharing and praying together.

We will also continue our conversation on marriage equality as we live into what it means to be an Open and Affirming congregation. We will begin to explore language Wednesday, September 10th at 7 pm or Sunday, September 21st at 11:30 am as we transition our conversation from listening to writing covenantal language about marriage equality. (See page 3)

Our vision at Bethel United Church of Christ is "To receive and share Jesus' message of extravagant love through compassionate care for our community and the world." This fall we hope that worship will feed your spirit and our faith formation classes will deepen your relationship with one another and God so that you are ready to face the broken world taking that spirit of compassionate care with you in all you do.

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

Continuing the Conversation on Marriage

BY LISA PETERSON

We had two productive discussions around marriage equality in July. The first touched on Biblical models of marriage, the ways practices in multiple areas of life have changed since the Bible was written, and the need to accept and love each other. Some in the group indicated they had not yet come to firm conclusions about marriage equality. Some felt that marriage should be about love and commitment between two people, and couples getting married in our church should be given the support and affirmation to help their marriages succeed.

The second group discussed the role of our church in advocating for marriage equality, whether within

Please join us *either*:

- **Wednesday, September 10th at 7 pm** or
- **Sunday, September 21st at 11:30 am**

as we transition our conversation from listening to writing covenantal language about marriage equality.

our own church, the UCC more broadly, or the Commonwealth of Virginia as a whole. The group felt that, if our church is Open and Affirming, we need to affirm all aspects of that covenant—we can't draw a line that allows access to some parts of church life but not others. The group thought it would be best to look back at our own Open and Affirming covenant, first to determine

whether we explicitly addressed marriage at that time and, if not, to consider whether we might be able to modify the language to include marriage.

On the basis of these discussions, I have obtained from the UCC several models of covenant language that address marriage in some form. We have also taken a look back at our own covenant language, which does not address marriage, but could be easily modified to incorporate marriage. I will work on some possible language for people to consider as we move into a second round of meetings (see box above). I hope that we will have as good attendance at these two sessions as we had at the first two, and look forward to continuing this conversation with you all.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION SERIES

CHRISTIANITY & ISLAM



So Much In Common, So Far Apart

A 6-week course aimed at showing the primary similarities and differences between the two faiths in the hope that greater understanding of each will foster greater tolerance and love when the secular world seems to be pushing us apart.

Sunday afternoons, beginning Sunday, September 7, 2014, 12:30 PM at **Arlington Forest United Methodist Church**, 4701 Arlington Blvd., Arlington, Virginia 22203 (703-525-0961)

FAITH DAY @ NATS PARK

Saturday, September 6 is Faith Day at Nationals Park as there will be special postgame concert with Lincoln Brewster after the game (4:05 pm start time vs. Philadelphia Phillies). If there is interest, we can order group tickets at \$12-\$29 depending on where people would like to sit (\$12 in Upper Infield Gallery, with the others Outfield or Left or Right Field). Please contact Janna Lipman at jmlipman@hotmail.com if you are interested. If we have more than five people interested, we can organize tickets and rides, etc.



Summer Community Worship



The community choir, with voices from Bethel as well as Arlington Church of the Brethren and Arlington Forest United Methodist Church, performs at the first of four community worship services in August hosted at Bethel (above). Subsequent services were held at the other two participating churches, culminating in a joint worship service at Lubber Run Park (bottom left) followed by a wonderful picnic (left).

COMMUNITY WORSHIP REFLECTIONS

As our series of community worship ended, what have you learned? Where do you see God working through this partnership among these three church communities? Where do we go from here?

Please share any thoughts or feedback you have about your experience worshipping together these last few weeks by filling out a short questionnaire at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/communityworship2014>



September is Hunger Action

AFAC (Arlington Food Assistance Center) will hold events throughout the month to raise awareness of hunger in our community—grocery store food drives, a documentary on hunger, a free Shred for Bread event (see box below), farm gleaning and an open house. There are many ways to volunteer. Learn more at www.afac.org or call 703-845-8486.

Do you ever wonder where your food drive donations go? Find out during Hunger Action Month by visiting AFAC on Monday, September 15th, for a short tour. Drop by anytime between 7-8 pm and see for yourself.

And in case you missed our showing of the film *A Place at the Table*, join AFAC for another screening of the film at First Presbyterian Church of Arlington, 601 N. Vermont Street, on Tuesday, September 23rd



Bethel volunteers bag produce at AFAC last month.

7-8:30 pm. Approximately 50 million Americans—and one in four children—don't know where their next meal is coming from. *A Place at the Table* tells the powerful stories of three such Americans, who maintain their dignity even as they struggle just to eat.

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT

Drive-in Shredding

Saturday
Sept. 20
10:00 – 1:00 p.m.



At the **Arlington Church of the Brethren**
300 N. Montague Street

non-perishable food or donations for AFAC
(Arlington Food Assistance Center) requested

Sponsored by Ann Wilson
of
Keller Williams Realty



for



CEREAL GOAL REACHED!!

The Social Concerns Committee is delighted to announce that Bethel has reached—and surpassed—its 2014 goal of donating 365 boxes of cereal to AFAC four months early. August brought in 51 more boxes (even though we were “home” only two Sundays) for a **year-to-date total of 379**. Let's keep going to ensure children get a good breakfast—especially with school resuming.



SUNDAY SCHOOL RESUMES

Sunday, September 7th our Sunday school classes will reconvene. Classes include: nursery care for our youngest children, a class for 2 and 3 year olds, a class for 4 and 5 year olds, an elementary school class and a middle school class. Classes meet weekly after children's time during worship.

Looking Ahead...

2014 CROPWALK: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18TH

If you like to walk, please consider walking for a good cause. The 2014 Arlington CROPWALK will be held on Saturday, October 18th, starting at 9:00 am at Arlington Forest United Methodist Church, 4701 Arlington Blvd., Arlington. The aim of the walk is to help raise money for Church World Service to fight hunger around the world. One-fourth of the money collected comes back to Arlington for the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC). Last year Bethel's walkers raised \$7,195, which means \$1,798.75 went to AFAC. With more walkers we could raise even more. If you



Bethel's contingent in last year's interfaith CROPWALK against hunger.

want to walk for CROP, please contact Art Lipman (703-920-6423). If you can't walk, please sponsor our walkers generously.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION COMMUNITY SERIES



The Book of Revelation: Not to Be Left Behind?

A class for adults exploring the Book of Revelation's role as it evaluated the political and social culture of John's time and challenges us today to speak truths to power.

SAVE THE DATES!

To be held at Bethel United Church of Christ and Arlington Church of the Brethren

Fridays Oct. 17, Oct. 24 and Nov. 7 from 6 to 8:30 pm starting with a dinner for all ages.

Child care will be offered during the class

FINANCE CORNER

It is that time of year again when church leaders focus on planning and budgeting for the new year. Committee chairmen have been tasked with planning activities and associated budgets for 2015 by September 30. In early October we will be asking members to make both financial and time commitments. Please remember as we ramp up our campaign we need leaders, workers, and financial contributions to continue and increase the good work of the people of Bethel UCC. Please start thinking how you would like to be an active participant in

CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS

Joan Graver has offered to collect birthdays of our worshiping community so that we might be able to honor these special days together. If you would like to share your birthday, please email it to Joan at va2pa@aol.com and she will collect a list for us that will be kept within the church community.



September 2014 at Bethel UCC

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6 4 p.m. Faith Day @ Nationals Park
7 10 a.m. Worship & Communion / Sunday School 11 a.m. Fellowship 11:30 a.m. Social Concerns Commit- tee (Library)	8	9	10 7 p.m. Next Steps on Marriage Equality (Library)	11	12	13
14 10 a.m. Worship / Sunday School 11 a.m. Fellowship	15	16	17 7 p.m. Bible Study (Library)	18 12 noon Third Thursday Lunch (Library)	19	20
21 10 a.m. Worship / Sunday School 11 a.m. Fellowship 11:30 a.m. Next Steps on Marriage Equality (Library)	22	23	24 7 p.m. Bible Study (Library)	25	26	27
28 10 a.m. Worship/ Sunday School 11 a.m. Fellowship	29	30		<div>Head Usher for Sept. Ralph Buglass</div>		