

MARCH 2015

BETHEL UCC beacon

worship

MARCH 1

Capernaum
Mark 2:1-12
Rev. Kristen Curlee

MARCH 8

The Mountains
Matthew 5:1-2a & 7:24-29
Rev. Kristen Curlee

MARCH 15

The Sea of Galilee
Mark 4:35-41 & Matthew 14:22-33
Rev. Kristen Curlee

MARCH 22

Samaria
John 4:3-10
Rev. Kristen Curlee

PALM SUNDAY | MARCH 29

Jerusalem
Mark 11:1-11
Rev. Carolyn Richar

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

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

BETHEL UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

4347 Arlington Blvd., Arlington, VA 22203

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A Modern Twist on Lenten Fasting

BY PASTOR KRISTEN CURLEE

Lent is a season of fasting, prayer, repentance and drawing closer to God. We are all called and encouraged during this season to be intentional about seeking God. Just as our experiences of the divine occur in a plethora of different ways, so too should our Lenten practices represent that same diverse range.

For generations Christians around the world have fasted for during Lent. Even today fasting is very meaningful for many. For extremely devoted followers of this practice, this usually means daytime fast from food. For others, it means refraining from meat, sweets, soda or other favorite foods. Some people fast for the 40 days of Lent (which excludes the Sundays) while others fast from Ash Wednesday until Easter Sunday. Many find that they connect to Jesus' suffering for 40 days and 40 nights in the wilderness and later on the cross as they face denial of their own physical needs and wants. I've heard people reflect that in giving something up during the season of Lent, as they miss that food or feel the pangs of hunger, their minds turn to God.

For those of us whose faith is about seeing the face of Christ in another human being, fasting sometimes comes up short—maybe it feels isolated. This feeling has led some to reverse the practice and, instead of giving something up, to add a Christian practice into their daily lives for Lent. Sometimes this means adding a daily prayer for someone in need of healing or sharing an act of love each day. For some, an addition such as this—rather than subtraction—is what deepens their faith because it



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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.**

From the Pastor *(continued from page 1)*

helps them connect and relate to the people around them.

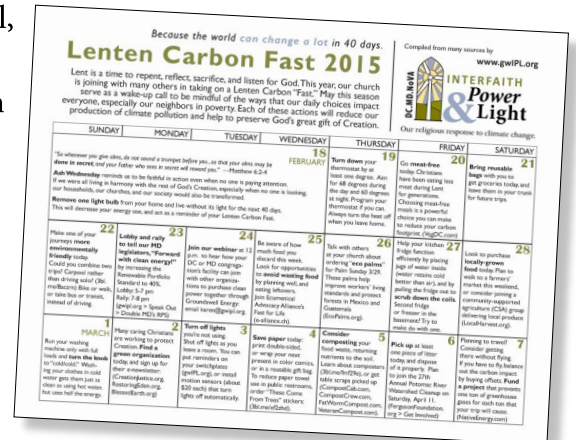
For those of us whose faith is expressed in acts of social justice and advocacy there is still another practice to consider this Lenten season. Since 2011 the United Church of Christ, along with many ecumenical and environmental partners such as the Greater Washington Interfaith Power and Light, has put a different spin on the traditional Lenten fast and encouraged people and churches to participate in a "carbon fast."

"Living as we are at a time when our actions—along with the actions of only a few generations—have threatened Creation as we know it by the excessive burning of fossil fuel, it is fitting to engage in a spiritual discipline of fasting from carbon," said Rev. Jim Antal of the UCC Massachusetts Conference.

This type of fast encourages everyone to reduce their carbon footprint by intentional changes on a daily basis. One day maybe it means giving up the car and walking or taking the bus. It could mean switching to local produce. Another day maybe it means unplugging all the electronics when they are not on or maybe it means unplugging for a day and choosing a book or board game over the computer, television or iPad.

Greater Washington Interfaith Power and Light created a calendar with a carbon fast for each day. It's available online at: <http://gwipl.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/2015-IPL-Lenten-Carbon-Fast-Calendar.pdf>.

As you continue along your Lenten journey, may your daily devotions, prayers, study and fasting—however you choose to live out these practices—deepen your relationship with God. Amen.



Every member of Bethel are the ministers



staff & leadership

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Rev. Dr. H. Donald Smith

Bethel, Building, Future: The Conversation is Coming!

BY WHIT WHEELER

While we are still finalizing the dates and details, the Long-Range Planning Committee and I want to let you know about our effort to develop a long-range plan for our wonderful congregation and building, which will kick off in late March/early April. Our plan is a series of conversations and listening sessions that build over a 3-4 month period.

First, we'll look at the future of Bethel—in 1-2 years, in 5-7 years, and in 10-12 years. Where will Bethel be, how will we as individuals fit in, and what seeds can we plant today that will be part of that legacy and tradition.

The second part will then use the work of our committees (Worship & Music, Christian Education, Social Concerns, Outreach & Evangelism and Fellowship) as a lens to ask questions such as “How does our building support Bethel’s vision and mission through the efforts of those volunteers?” and “What changes and improvements can we make to strengthen the work of those ministries?”

Finally, we'll bring those answers and results to-

gether into prioritized list over the near and longer term: “where should we focus our energy and resources in improving our wonderful building?”

For each of these portions, we are looking to have both a weeknight and a Sunday session—to give us all an opportunity to participate despite our busy schedules. Each of these sections will be roughly a month apart as these conversations build on each other. Our goal will be a discussion of the results at our summer meeting as well a long-range plan.

If you have ideas, suggestions or want to help lead these sessions, feel free to reach out to me with your ideas. Before we begin, I will be reaching out to the chairs of each of our committees to ask for a representative to speak for the committee in the various discussion sessions. Also, I will send out an email to all of you with a more detailed 1-2 page summary that will map out this journey and the key questions at each stage. We look forward to listening to the discussion and your thoughts and ideas!

JOIN A COMMITTEE!

Our new committee leadership is prayerfully planning and organizing our ministries for 2015. All our committees are open and you are invited to consider serving. If you would like to join a committee, attend a meeting or email the committee chair:

- **Christian Education:** Chrissy Waldo
- **Fellowship:** Cheryl Falcone
- **Finance:** Bill Graver
- **Music and Worship:** Ralph Buglass
- **Outreach and Evangelism:** Donna Zadnik
- **Social Concerns:** Kristen Wheeler

If you are interested in working with Property, which remains without a chair, contact Pastor Kristen.



Bethel's leadership was officially installed during worship last month.

Clothes Drive for RPC in March

As you begin your spring cleaning this month, please collect clothes for the residents at the Residential Program Center (RPC), a homeless shelter in Arlington that Bethel has worked with for many years. Located off Columbia Pike near the Pentagon, RPC is Arlington's only 24-hour substance abuse recovery center and homeless shelter.

RPC is relying on Bethel to collect these much-needed clothing items: sweatpants, socks, underwear, and professional clothing for job interviews. RPC prefers new or gently used items. RPC's residents are roughly two-thirds male, one-third female.

RPC serves over 400 people each year. The center features a 12-bed detoxification unit that provide detoxification services for up to 14 days; a 10-bed early recovery unit for post-detoxification treatment services for up to three months, and a 44-bed homeless shelter for high-intensity case management, education, training, and referral services.

Please look for the collection box as you enter the church. We will collect donations through Palm Sunday, March 29.

Lighthouse Free Clinic Update

Bethel continues to support Faro De Luz (Lighthouse) Free Clinic in San Luis Talpa, El Salvador by paying \$600/month for the salary of Dr. Lisette Alfaro and through the collection of vitamins, first aid supplies and over-the-counter medications. Dr. Alfaro provides primary medical



care to many children, pregnant women and the elderly primarily—seeing on average 250-300 patients each month. El Salvador has recently seen an outbreak of chikungunya fever—a viral disease transmitted via mosquitos that has infected over 100,000

people there. This painful illness causes a high fever and severe joint/muscle pain that can last for months. There is no treatment except rest and pain medications. Dr. Lisette suffered from chikungunya fever this past summer and has treated many patients for this.

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6 "4" 2015

RPC (Residential Program Center) and **Lighthouse Free Clinic** (featured here) are two of six service organizations Bethel's Social Concerns Committee has chosen to focus its support on during 2015.

The others (which we will also spotlight throughout the year in various ways) are:

- **Shaw Community Ministry** (SCM) - a UCC-sponsored organization providing programs for families in the Shaw community in Washington, DC. www.shawministry.org.
- **Arlington Academy of Hope** (AAH) - a school in Uganda that grew out of work by John and Joyce Wanda here at Bethel; we will continue our support of the education for Joshua, now in his second year of primary school. www.aahuganda.org.
- **Offender AID and Restoration** (OAR) - an Arlington-based restorative justice organization that blends compassion and accountability to assist offenders in leading productive and responsible lives, to the benefit of all. www.OARonline.org,
- **Arlington Thrive**—a community organization providing emergency assistance on a short-term basis in the following areas: rent (the greatest need), utility, medical, dental, prescriptions and other miscellaneous needs. www.arlingtonthrive.org

Monetary donations are also accepted for Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) although our primary focus continues to be collecting low-sugar cereal and other non-perishable foods weekly.

Autism Awareness

BY KRISTEN WHEELER

In preparation for our screening of “Sound the Alarm” for Autism Awareness Month in April (see notice at right), we will be holding a brief conversation (1 hour) about autism in the Library on Sunday, March 22nd at 11:30 am. We will cover what autism is and isn’t, how Bethel can be a welcoming place, things you can do in your community to help and several things you shouldn’t say to or about someone who is autistic or their family members. As most of you are aware, Jacob is a high-functioning autistic, and our family lives with this everyday, so Autism Awareness is very near and dear to us.

Light It Up Blue

World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD), celebrated each year on April 2, was adopted by the United Nations in 2007 to shine a bright light on autism as a growing global health crisis. Autism is one of only three health issues to be recognized with its own day by the United Nations. WAAD activities increase world knowledge of autism and impart information about the

importance of early diagnosis and early intervention. Additionally, WAAD celebrates the unique talents and skills of persons with autism around the world.

On World Autism Awareness Day, the organization Autism

Speaks celebrates its international “Light It Up Blue” campaign. Thousands of iconic landmarks, communities, businesses and homes across the globe unite by shining bright blue lights in honor of the millions of individuals and families around the world affected by autism.

In support of this, we will be changing the exterior lights at Bethel to blue on April 2. We will be purchasing extra bulbs that members of the congregation may purchase for a small donation and urge everyone to replace one outside light with a blue bulb for the day.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

As a reminder, this Lenten season we will once again be taking up a special collection for One Great Hour of Sharing. The bulk of this offering goes to support water, hunger, disaster relief and empowerment programs. Focusing on these four areas allows One Great Hour of Sharing to address some of the root causes of suffering in our world. We will have special offering envelopes and inserts on the Sundays we are taking up the collection.

SAVE THE DATE

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

film & conversation

Autism

Statistics show that one in every 68 children in the United States is affected by autism—costing families an average of \$60,000 per year.

Bethel United Church of Christ and **Autism Speaks** present a special Arlington community and Autism Awareness Month showing of

“Sounding the Alarm: Battling the Autism Epidemic”

Sounding the Alarm is a documentary that examines the lives of 12 families affected by autism and chronicles the challenges and opportunities they face from diagnosis to adulthood.

A **panel discussion** follows with experts from the medical, familial, policy and religious fields focused on autism services and awareness.

Sunday, April 26, 2015

6:00 pm - Movie 7:45 pm - Panel Discussion

Donations to Autism Speaks welcomed



Bethelites bagged oranges last month at Arlington Food Assistance Center. Please mark your calendars for Friday, April 24 for our next Friday evening for bagging at AFAC (in place of our usual first Friday, which is Good Friday). We will meet for dinner at Boston Market on Columbia Pike at 6 pm and then gather for bagging at 7 pm at AFAC, 2708 S. Nelson St. in Shirlington.



Our annual Easter egg hunt will be held after worship on Easter Sunday, April 5.

If you are able to help out, please contact Cheryl Falcone.

Clinic Update

(continued from page 4)

The people served by the Faro De Luz clinic live in poverty on only \$30-\$50/month. Unless medical care is free, the choice is often between eating or getting medical help. Bethel works in partnership with La Luz Verdadera to ensure the clinic is staffed and has needed medicines, supplies and medical equipment.

With some long-term donors having moved out of the area or gone "home" to heaven, the clinic could use help with commitments for a regular monthly donation. \$30/month pays for one day of the doctor's salary. We are in need of seven new donors who would commit to \$30/month ongoing to ensure that we keep enough dona-

tions monthly to cover the doctor's salary. We always welcome any donation anyone wishes to make financially—and also love to get donations of vitamins for children, pregnant women and the elderly as vitamins are a very ex-

pensive item in El Salvador.

If you have questions or would like more information, Associate Pastor Carolyn Richar would be happy to talk with you; call her at 703-505-0265 or email her at carolynsrichar@hotmail.com.

Please join the

VIRGINIA BRONZE

COMMUNITY HANDBELL ENSEMBLE

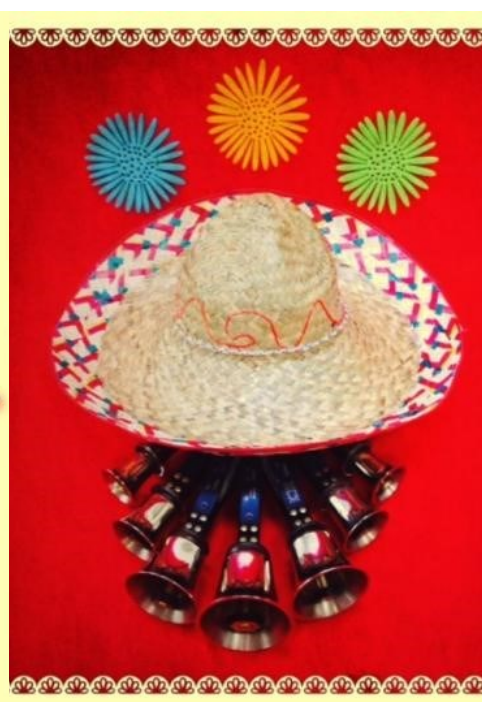
For a celebration of music from

South of the Border

Sunday, March 15 at 4:00 PM

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

Carol Feather Martin,
Artistic Director



A different kind of

Lenten service

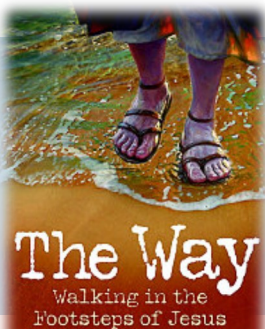
All are welcome!



ecumenical hands-on
multi-generational
experiential
community-wide
creative



Sunday evenings February 22 - March 22 5 pm Light supper follows
Arlington Forest United Methodist Church 4701 Arlington Blvd (Rt 50 westbound)



WEDNESDAY EVENING LENTEN STUDY AT BETHEL

Join us for Lenten study Wednesday nights at 7 pm in the Library through March 25th, preceded by soup and bread at 6 pm. Our theme this year is *The Way*, a study by Adam Hamilton that examines the places of Jesus' ministry and how geography and the people interact with his message. No advance preparation necessary and childcare provided.

March 2015 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. Consistory meeting (Library) 5 p.m. Lenten Service at Arlington Forest UMC (dinner following)	2	3	4 6 p.m. Light soup dinner 7 p.m. Bible Study (Library)	5	6	7
8 10 a.m. Worship / Sunday School 11 a.m. Fellowship 11:30 a.m. Social Concerns Committee meeting (Library) 5 p.m. Lenten Service at Arlington Forest UMC (dinner following)	9	10	11 5 p.m. Worship & Music Committee (Library) 6 p.m. Light soup dinner 7 p.m. Bible Study (Library)	12	13	14
15 10 a.m. Worship / Sunday School 11 a.m. Fellowship 11:30 a.m. Christian Education Committee meeting (Library) 5 p.m. Lenten Service at Arlington Forest UMC (dinner following)	16	17	18 6 p.m. Light soup dinner 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 11:30 a.m. Autism Conversation (Library) 5 p.m. Lenten Service at Arlington Forest UMC (dinner following)	23	24	25 6 p.m. Light soup dinner 7 p.m. Bible Study (Library)	26	27	28
29 PALM SUNDAY 10 a.m. Worship / Sunday School 11 a.m. Fellowship	30	31	<i>Holy Week continues...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday, April 2: Maundy Thursday Worship at 7 pm preceded by dinner at 6 pm. • Friday, April 3: Ecumenical Good Friday Worship at 7 pm with our community church partners here at Bethel UCC. • Sunday, April 5: Easter Sunday Worship at 10 a.m. followed by an Easter Egg Hunt for children of all ages! 			