

APRIL 2015

BETHEL UCC beacon

worship

EASTER | APRIL 5

Be Not Afraid

Mark 16:1-8

Rev. Kristen Curlee

APRIL 12

► **NOTE: Community Worship
at Arlington Forest UMC**
(at 11 a.m.; Sunday School
for all ages at 10 a.m.)

APRIL 19

Made by God

Genesis 1:1-31; 2:1-4

Rev. Kristen Curlee

APRIL 26

Finding God

John 1:1-5

Rev. Kristen Curlee

SUNDAY SCHEDULE AT BETHEL

10 a.m. Worship & Sunday School

11 a.m. Fellowship Time

Easter's Living Message of Light

BY PASTOR KRISTEN CURLEE

On Easter Sunday our sanctuary will be filled with joy as we sing and shout "Alleluia, Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed!" The joy will reverberate around the room and we hope, soak deep into our soul so that in the days and weeks after Easter, when the proverbial trumpets have faded, we will remember the joy of Easter morning. The stone has been rolled away. Christ is risen. God's love for humanity is so great that not even death can limit God's works in this world.



Still, we ask, "Okay now what?" We have this joy, how and where do we share it? What do we do with this Good News? What does it mean to be an Easter people living in the light of abounding love?

This April, one thing it means is that we turn the bright light of God shining in and through us from white to blue as we participate in "Light It Up Blue" (see page 3). Started in 2010 by the organization Autism Speaks, "Light it Up Blue" is a campaign to raise autism awareness. Today about one in 68 children is diagnosed with autism and of those a vast majority are boys, which is why blue has become the color of autism.

Light It Up Blue is an outward expression of the Easter message that is already alive and well at Bethel United Church of Christ. We are a place of welcome where we celebrate the gifts that each person brings. I see it when Becky and Jake hang out at AFAC, bagging fruit and chatting about the latest movies. Jake is one of our most dedicated AFAC volunteers. I see it when Jake raises his hand during Joys and Concerns to share what is in his heart. I remember it when I think about Robert and

(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)*

all the ways Bethel encouraged him to take an active role in worship as our greeter. I see it in the way the children are all welcomed into worship with their wiggles, their shouts, their tears, their questions, their clamors and their smiles.

Living an Easter message is inviting everyone, no matter who they are on life's journey, into the Easter story of God's extravagant love and meeting them where they are. Let us continue to live as an Easter people with hospitality and welcome to all those who come through our doors. As we reach outside our walls to shine God's light into the world, this month, let that light shine blue.

APRIL WORSHIP NOTES

The Sunday after Easter, April 12th, we will gather with our community partners, Arlington Church of the Brethren and Arlington Forest United Methodist Church, for an ecumenical service **at Arlington Forest UMC**, just a few blocks down Rt. 50 at 4701 Arlington Blvd. Sunday school for all ages will be offered at 10 a.m. with worship at 11 a.m.

Back at Bethel on April 19th, Pastor Kristen will begin an Eastertide sermon series on creation and earth stewardship, highlighted that day by an **Earth Day celebration** that will feature a tree planting at Bethel.

PASTOR CAROLYN SABBATICAL

Associate Pastor Carolyn Richar will begin a well-deserved three-month sabbatical this month, providing her time for religious study and personal reflection. Her last Sunday with us until mid-July will be Easter. Please extend best wishes when you see her.



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

Bethel Observes April as Autism Awareness Month

Be sure to reserve the evening of Sunday, April 26th when Bethel will screen “Sounding the Alarm,” a documentary that provides a poignant look inside the lives of those affected by autism. We will also host a panel discussion of therapeutic, religious and family representatives to increase our understanding of autism, its manifestations and services to alleviate it. Gather at 6 p.m. at Bethel;

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

donations to our cosponsor, Autism Speaks, gratefully accepted.

Autism Awareness Month kicks off at Bethel with “Light It Up Blue” on April 2nd when we, along with churches, schools, business, and other community organizations all across the country, change outdoor white light bulbs to blue to spread autism awareness. April 2nd coincides with Maundy Thursday, so don’t be surprised to see the outside lights giving off a blue tint.

Autism, a developmental disorder that impacts a person’s ability to communicate and socialize, is the fastest growing serious developmental disability in the U.S.



April 2, 2015
Shine a Light on Autism

Join the world to “Light It Up Blue” on April 2nd, World Autism Awareness Day.
Help spread awareness throughout April, Autism Awareness Month.

LEARN more at www.AutismSpeaks.org/LIUB

AUTISM SPEAKS
It's time to listen.

Social Concerns April Spotlight

This month the Social Concerns Committee highlights **Arlington Thrive**.

Arlington Thrive is the only organization in Arlington County that provides same-day, emergency financial assistance to county residents who experience sudden financial crisis such as temporary unemployment or illness. Most clients are the working poor, elderly and disabled people on a fixed income, and the homeless and formerly homeless who need Arlington Thrive's funds as a "safety net" until they are able to get back on firmer financial footing. Arlington Thrive's clients are among Arlington County's most vulnerable residents. Families with children are given the highest priority, and one-



third of the individuals served by Arlington Thrive are children.

With four part-time staff and 34 volunteers, Arlington Thrive serves over 5,000 clients every year. The two main assistance programs are the Daily Emergency Financial Assistance program and the Carter-Jenkinson Housing Assistance program.

- **The Daily Program**, budgeted at \$345,000 annually, employs trained volunteers who fulfill requests from Arlington County and private social service case-

workers on behalf of their clients. Some of the private organizations are Arlington Street People's Assistance Network (A-SPAN), Doorways for Women and Children, the Alexandria-Arlington Coalition for the Homeless (AACH) that operates Sullivan House, and Northern Virginia Family Services.

- **The Carter-Jenkinson Housing Assistance program**, budgeted at \$320,000 annually, is used exclusively to prevent the eviction of families and individuals. Recipients must be referred by County social workers.

For more information, visit Arlington Thrive's website at www.arlingtonthrive.org.

RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM CENTER MARCH CLOTHING DRIVE A HUGE SUCCESS



Thank you to all who so generously donated clothes during March for the male and female adult residents at RPC, the Residential Program Center, a homeless shelter and substance abuse recovery center in Arlington. All the clothes were blessed during Time with our Children on Palm Sunday, March 29th.

AFAC Cereal Drive Right on Track!

Thank you to everyone who contributed so generously in March when we collected 68 boxes of cereal, which have been donated to Arlington Food Assistance Center. This puts us right on track toward meeting our goal of 600 boxes to AFAC by the end of the year. Our year-to-date total is now up to 152, just slightly ahead of the 50 boxes we need to collect on average each month.

The number of families coming to AFAC continues to increase dramatically, according to Executive Director Charlie Meng. "AFAC saw a 26% increase in client demand in FY2014, and we are already 26.9% ahead of last year—a total of 52.9% more clients in less than two years. We are now serving an average of 2,118 families each week—5,043 individuals—all of

Help us meet our 2015 goal:



BOXES OF CEREAL

 **for Arlington Food Assistance Center**

Low-sugar cereals, please!

whom are Arlington County residents. I do not expect these numbers to abate. In fact, as the cost of living continues to rise in Arlington, and the Federal SNAP [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program] and other safety-net programs continue to be cut, client demand will only increase," he says.

SHRED FOR BREAD

Start collecting your personal papers now (especially helpful during tax preparation season) and bring them to Little Falls Presbyterian Church, 6025 Little Falls Rd., on Saturday, April 18th, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. and have them professionally shredded on-site by ProShred for free in exchange for a food or monetary donation to AFAC. Visit AFAC's website, www.afac.org, for details about acceptable items.

This month's **AFAC Bagging** will be on Friday, April 24 (instead of the first Friday, which is Good Friday).

FINANCE CORNER

On Sunday, March 15th we were blessed with special music from Rebecca Henry (photo at right). It is always a joy to have Rebecca or Liz Dutton, two of our regular vocalists, join us, says Pastor Kristen. "These special offerings of music are brought to us by the Buglass Fund which was established in the memory of Ralph Buglass's mother," she explains. "Like all our Memorial Funds, anyone can make a contribution to further the ministry towards which that fund was created. This is one that I know feeds the spirit of many of us. Donations to continue the special music ministry are always encouraged."



FELLOWSHIP HOSTS

| | |
|----------|---------------------|
| April 5 | Wheeler Family |
| April 19 | Ralph Buglass |
| April 26 | Host needed! |

Long-Range Planning Effort Begins This Month

Bethel's long range planning effort will kick off this month with a series of dialogue and listening sessions aimed at developing a congregation consensus on how to best update and modernize our church building and facilities so that they support our current ministries and set the stage for the next phase of Bethel's growth.

This will include a near term (1-2 years out) list of priorities and projects as well as mid term renovation projects (2-5+ years).

The discussion sessions—both a Sunday post-worship (April 19) and a weeknight session (April 15) to facilitate our busy schedules and encourage broad participation—will seek to elicit members' "hopes and dreams" for Bethel at those

points in time and engage members with such questions as:

- Where will Bethel be at the various points in time?
- How big will we be?
- What will our church and its ministries look like?
- What will my personal role be at various points?
- What will my legacy be then based on actions today?

This effort is being undertaken by the Long Range Planning Committee. Based on Bethel's Constitution and By-Laws, the committee consists of Consistory President (Whit Wheeler), Trustee (Peter Rich), Treasurer (Judy Norton), and Senior Pastor (Kristen Curlee). Jean Luks has agreed to serve as an

additional Spiritual Council representative. If anyone is unable to make the discussion sessions, s/he is always welcome to speak to committee members and provide input directly.

The process will continue in May with two more dialogue and listening sessions that will center around our committees and their work (Worship & Music, Christian Education, Fellowship, Outreach & Evangelism, and Social Concerns).

Final sessions over the summer will look at the ideas generated and place them in three priority categories (e.g., must-do, need-to-do, nice-to-do) and also consider whether the changes are needed in the near, medium or far term.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Along with Arlington Church of the Brethren and Arlington Forest United Methodist, Bethel will offer Vacation Bible School this summer. It will be held daily Monday, August 3rd through Friday, August 7th from 6 to 8 pm at Arlington Forest UMC. All ages welcome!

VBS begins with a light dinner followed by a story and music, then there are multiple tracks with stations for the children and a faith formation class for the adults. Cost: \$25 per child (children under 2 are free), \$50 for a family of two or more. Nursery care provided. All volunteers will be background-checked.

Registration forms available beginning April 1st at all three churches.



April 2015 at Bethel UCC

| sunday | monday | tuesday | wednesday | thursday | friday | saturday |
|--|--------|---------|---|---|---|----------|
| <div>Head Usher for April Peter Rich</div> | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | | | | MAUNDY THURSDAY 6 p.m. Potluck Meal 7 p.m. Worship/Communion | GOOD FRIDAY 7 p.m. Community Worship (at Bethel UCC with Arlington Church of the Brethren & Arlington Forest United Methodist Church) | |
| 5 EASTER SUNDAY 10 a.m. Worship & Communion 11 a.m. Fellowship/Easter Egg Hunt | 6 | 7 | 8 7 p.m. Bible Study (Library) | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 12 WORSHIP AT ARLINGTON FOREST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 10 a.m. Sunday School for all ages 11 a.m. Ecumenical Worship 12 noon Fellowship | 13 | 14 | 15 7 p.m. Long Range Planning Discussion Session (Library) | 16 12 noon Third Thursday Lunch (Library) | 17 | 18 |
| 19 10 a.m. Worship / Sunday School 11 a.m. Fellowship 11:30 a.m. Long Range Planning Discussion Session (Library) | 20 | 21 | 22 7 p.m. Bible Study (Library) | 23 | 24 7 p.m. Bagging at AFAC, 2708 S. Nelson St. <i>Optional:</i> meet for dinner at 6 p.m. (Boston Market on Columbia Pike) | 25 |
| 26 10 a.m. Worship / Sunday School 11 a.m. Fellowship 6 p.m. Autism documentary screening & panel discussion | 27 | 28 | 29 7 p.m. Bible Study (Library) | 30 | | |