

BETHEL UCC beacon

worship

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1

Being Saints | *Matthew 23:1-12*
Rev. Kristen Curlee

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8

Upon this Foundation | *Acts 5:17-32*
Rev. Kristen Curlee

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15

Forgotten Saints | *John 12:1-8*
Rev. Kristen Curlee

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22

Modern Saints | *John 18:33-37*
Rev. Kristen Curlee

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25

THANKSGIVING EVE | 7 p.m.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29

Hopeful New Year
Jeremiah 33:14-16 | Luke 21:25-36
Mr. Jason Thompson

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

BETHEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Visit the Prisoner

BY PASTOR KRISTEN CURLEE



In Matthew's Gospel Jesus reminds us of our responsibility to care for the least of these. When we do, when we care for those on the margins, we are caring for Jesus. Visit the prisoner, Jesus says. When we visit those in prison, it is as if we are visiting Jesus.

There are many prisoners in need of visits. The rate of prisoners, especially young African American men, is on the rise as it has been for almost a generation. Some are calling it the "new Jim Crow," others are calling it the "schools to prison pipeline." By whatever name, the statistics are troubling and call for a closer examination of the injustices that are at work. This summer at our General Synod, the United Church of Christ approved two resolutions calling for advocacy, education and action to address the growing concerns with our justice system.

I am deeply troubled by the injustice of mass incarceration, of the inequitable sentencing and the barriers to reentry into our society after someone has served time. I pray that our broken system of justice might be transformed. Yet we must do more.

One of the biggest challenges for offenders when they are released from prison is to find legal employment that can sustain a person's livelihood. In addition, after prison many people's safety nets are limited or cut as family and friends separate themselves from the prisoner. The Arlington Office of Aid and Restoration (OAR), a grassroots, local organization dedicated to visiting the prisoner and finding ways to address the plethora of injustice, works diligently to assist with employment and to maintain and repair family ties. This holiday season we can

(continued on 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.**

From the Pastor *(continued from page 1)*

help some prisoners right here in our own community stay connected with his or her family.

The holidays are very hard for families who are not together. Prisoners do not have a way to buy presents for family members, but you can help make a difference in the lives of some of these families. You can help make sure that this holiday season is filled with unexpected joy. OAR is collecting new toys for children, infant to 18 years of age, along with \$5 to \$15 gift cards so that some of the prisoners can share Christmas with their children.

This month kicks off the holiday season as we gather around the table and give God thanks for all the blessings in our lives. Then we enter into to our sacred season of waiting as we prepare our hearts and minds for the gift of the Christ child. In this season that can be swept away with preparations, parties and presents, may we be mindful of Jesus' call to care.

TRANSITION UPDATE

Lisa Peterson, Bill Graver and Judy Norton will be working with the UCC Potomac Association to identify an interim pastor to lead us as we move to the search and call process for a settled pastor. They are currently working on a position description that will be shared with the Potomac Association, which will then share with us the names of interim pastors that most closely match our needs. Their aim is to have an interim pastor on board as close as possible to Pastor Kristen's departure on January 3.

Fellowship Committee will be working on the farewell celebration for Pastor Kristen on January 3. Anyone interested in assisting with this effort can contact committee chair Cheryl Falcon (cafalcone50@gmail.com) or any committee member.

Every member of Bethel are the ministers



staff & leadership

Senior Pastor
Rev. Kristen Curlee
pastorkristencurlee@gmail.com

Associate Pastor
Rev. Carolyn Richar
crichear@capitalhospice.org

Student Pastor
Jason Thompson
jason7thompson@outlook.com

Church President
Whit Wheeler

Director of Music
Angie Stevens
angielatte@gmail.com

Interim Pastor Emeritus
Rev. Dr. H. Donald Smith

Kairos Prison Ministry

BY DONNA POMSOUVAN

Kairos is an international, inter-denominational Christian faith-based ministry to incarcerated men, women, youth and their families. It is an offspring of the Cur-sillo and Emmaus movements which present the Christian faith over three days of talks, activities, music and worship.

The cookies and prayer strips that you provided for this past Kairos weekend are one form of agape, a Greek word for selfless, spiritual love. These are presented to the participants (and the cookies to the whole prison) over the

course of the weekend. This agape touches the hearts of the women in a powerful way and is instrumental in breaking down the walls of despair and distrust that are hallmarks of prison life.

I have been involved in Kairos since 2000 at the Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women in Troy, VA. Over the course of the years I have seen the lives of many women transformed by the love and grace that God extends to us all. I will share just one short story: “Mary” participated in a Kairos weekend about eight years ago. She accepted

God’s love and forgiveness in to her life and became an inspiration to other residents. Because she had no money to tithe, she tithed her time, spending at least one tenth of her day extending her hand of

Toy drive for offenders’ families underway
See page 5

Christian fellowship to the most lost of her fellow prisoners. She developed cancer about four years ago and it progressively spread throughout her body. Although she was repeatedly denied her appeal for a compassionate parole, she gracefully accepted that her mission field was to the prison. Mary continued to tithe her time and witnessed from her wheelchair and eventual hospital bed. She died a year ago—and continues to be an inspiration to those whose lives she touched, including mine.

If you feel at all called to this ministry, please email me at pomsou@yahoo.com. I would love to tell you more.



Constructing a prayer chain and sorting cookies prior to going in to Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women for the Kairos weekend.

STEWARDSHIP 2016

The Budget Committee greatly appreciates the 13 pledges received in support of Bethel's 2016 Stewardship Campaign. If you've submitted your pledge—Thank you! Should you have any questions regarding about how to best submit your pledging, so

that it is held confidential, please contact Bill Graver at 703-624-8825 or at countrpane@aol.com. Sam Le, Bethel's Financial Secretary, is still accepting pledges; he may be reached at samle@alumni.virginia.edu.

Only **101** boxes of cereal to go in our 2015 AFAC drive!



Thanks to everyone for contributing **62** boxes in October. Our total for the year now stands at 499.

BETHELITES JOIN IN THE ARLINGTON CROPWALK

On Saturday, October 24, numerous Bethelites participated in the Arlington CROPWalk to help Church World Service fight hunger worldwide and the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) provide groceries to 2,200 families a week in Arlington.

Kristen Curlee, Cheryl Falcone with Tim'Myiah, Richard Lee, Art Lipman, Siza Ntshakala, Susan Peters, Lisa Peterson, Peter Rich, Carolyn Richar, Laura Wells, and Kristen and Jake Wheeler completed the walk.



Thank you to all who have sponsored a walker. If you have not had a chance to do so, you may still donate either directly to one of our walkers or through the Bethel Team's Arlington CROPWalk website: http://hunger.cwsglobal.org/site/TR/2015CROPHungerWalks/TR-CHW2015?team_id=121171&pg=team&fr_id=20843.

AFAC reminds congregations about the "Scouting For FOOD" drive. Boy Scouts will leave bags and flyers on the doorsteps of Arlington homes on Saturday, November 7 and return a week later on November 14 (after 9am) to collect the bags. Please place nonperishable items (no glass containers) in the bags. They will be delivered to AFAC.

Bethel's Thanksgiving Food drive encouraging extra food for AFAC will be Sunday, November 22 and Wednesday, November 25, at the Thanksgiving Eve service (see box). Donations of cereal and other non-perishable items are greatly appreciated.

AFAC is also having a **Holiday Food Drive** collecting cooking oil (in plastic bottles) and flour ending on December 12.

Thanksgiving Eve Worship

Wednesday,
November 25

7 pm

Bethel UCC

Please bring a food offering for AFAC



'Tis (Almost) the Season...



Advent worship begins Sunday, November 29th. Join us for lunch at 11:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall and Advent crafts to help kick off this season of joy and anticipation.

Bethel's annual Intergenerational Christmas Pageant returns on Sunday, December 20th during 10 a.m. worship. No rehearsals necessary, just come and



join in the telling of this sacred story of Jesus' birth.

Let's celebrate the season with our ecumenical partners Arlington Forest UMC and Arlington Church of the Brethren. Join us on Sunday, December 13th at 6:30 pm at Arlington Forest for dinner, Christmas carols and a visit from St. Nicholas. There is something for everyone.

CALLING ALL BAKERS

The holiday season is a perfect time to invite a friend or neighbor to join you for church. The Outreach Committee invites you to bake some



Christmas cookies early for us to share with our neighbors. Please bring homemade cookies packed in plastic sandwich bags with four to six cookies per bag on Sunday, November 29th. Outreach will send a bag home with each church member with a flier attached of our Advent and Christmas events and encourage everyone to invite someone to join us.

Toy Drive

OAR has provided gifts to children with incarcerated parents in our local detention centers for over 30 years. Each child receives gifts with a personalized note from their parent hand-delivered to them by volunteers or sent by mail. We do this in the hope that the children will feel remembered at holiday time.

Bring a gift for a child whose parent is incarcerated

- New and Unwrapped
- Ages Newborn to 18
- Contribute Gift Cards for Teens

DONATION BOX LOCATION

BETHEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Donations may also be made via our Amazon Wish List at <http://amzn.to/1LJR0cW>

Questions? Contact Heather at 703-228-7435 or hpritchett@oaronline.org

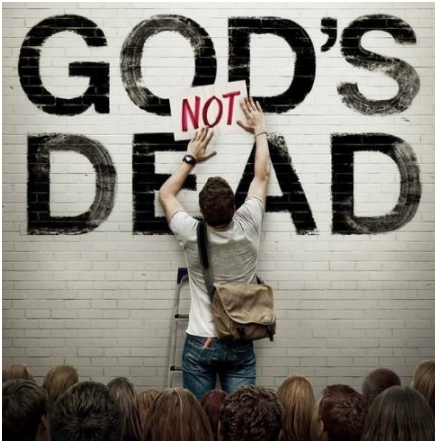


OAR | Strengthening Community through Second Chances

PLEASE BRING TOYS BY SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15

MOVIE NIGHT

Join us for Movie Night on Saturday, November 21 at 5:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall for pizza and a movie. *God's Not Dead* will be screened for adults and *Two by Two, God's Little Creatures* for the children. Movies start at 6:00 p.m. Please RSVP to Cheryl Falcone (cafalcone50@gmail.com) so she knows how much pizza to order or contact her with any questions.



CHILDREN'S PERFORMANCE

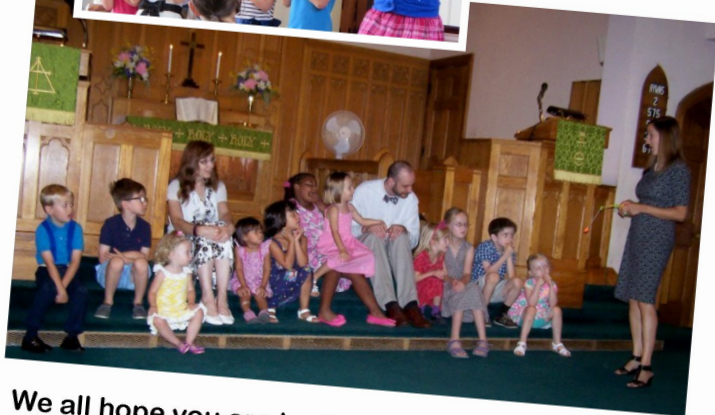
Our children are invited to join with Arlington Forest UMC and Arlington Church of the Brethren on Sunday, November 22 at 4:30 p.m. for the musical, *100% Chance of Rain: The Story of Noah*. Children ages three and up are invited to participate in telling the story. Rehearsals will be daily at 4:30 p.m. for one week starting on Sunday, November 15. Email Pastor Mike at Arlington UMC (arlingtonforestumc@yahoo.com) with questions.



Our weekly children's offering goes to sponsor the education of eight year old Joshua at Arlington Academy of Hope in Uganda, a program founded at Bethel. We recently sent Joshua an update on Bethel.



Hello
Joshua,



We all hope you are having a good year in school.



From all your friends at Bethel Church in the U.S.

November 2015 at Bethel UCC

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
1 10 a.m. Worship & Communion / Sunday School 11 a.m. Fellowship	2	3	4 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)	9	10	11 7 p.m. Bible Study (Library)	12	13	14
15 10 a.m. Worship / Sunday School 11 a.m. Fellowship	16	17	18 7 p.m. Bible Study (Library)	19 12 noon Third Thursday Lunch (Library)	20	21 5:30 p.m. Movie Night - see p. 5 (Fellowship Hall)
22 10 a.m. Worship / Sunday School 11 a.m. Fellowship	23	24	25 THANKSGIVING EVE 7 p.m. Worship / AFAC Offering	26 THANKSGIVING	27	28
29 ADVENT KICK-OFF 10 a.m. Worship / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch / Advent Crafts	30					