

BETHEL UCC beacon

DECEMBER 2015

worship

DECEMBER 6

Finding Peace

Malachi 3:1-4

Luke 3:1-6

Rev. Kristen Curlee

DECEMBER 13

Joyful Alleluia

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Luke 3:7-18

Rev. Kristen Curlee

DECEMBER 20

A Lifetime of Love

Christmas Pageant

DECEMBER 24

The Coming of the Light

Luke 2:1-20

Rev. Kristen Curlee

DECEMBER 27

Community Worship at Arlington

Forest

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

10 am Worship

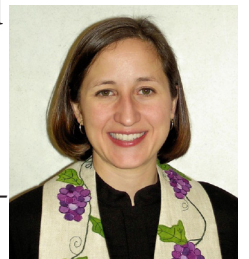
11 am Fellowship

BY PASTOR KRISTEN CURLEE

On the Horizon

Advent is here. It is the season of waiting and preparing. It is the season of anticipation and expectation for a new beginning. Advent starts four Sundays before Christmas, beginning this year on November 30th, and stretching to Christmas Eve, as it does every year.

Advent is not specifically mentioned in the Bible, but it is an ancient Christian practice, first observed in France in the fourth century. The word Advent comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means coming, and hints at the focus of this liturgical season.



This Advent we prepare, as in years before, for the coming of Jesus, the Christ, and with his birth the fulfillment of God's promise for the world. It is the promise of the Messiah to free humanity; the promise of God made flesh to show us the way to live and love; the promise of Christ's final victory; and the promise that the light of Christ living in our hearts burns bright every day. But this year is also different than years before because this year we also wait and prepare for our own new beginning.

This is the time of preparation for a new ministry; the next chapter in Bethel's almost 75 year history here in Arlington. There will be plenty of time to dream new dreams about

(continued on page 2)

BETHEL UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

4347 Arlington Blvd., Arlington, VA 22203

E-MAIL BethelUCCVa@verizon.net

WEB www.bethelucc-va.org

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

Seminary Intern
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
revhdsmith@starpower.net

On the Horizon CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

what kind of leadership is needed in this faith community. What kind of worship? What kind of service and faith formation ministries do you envision at Bethel? How can you build on the partnerships that we've created with Arlington Church of the Brethren and Arlington Forest UMC? These are all the questions that will be asked as you build a vision for what is next. But right now, in this season of preparation we need to sit, wait and watch to fully know where we are right now. It is our task in this season to see what God has already done and is doing right now in our community. This is a time to prepare your hearts and minds as we say good bye so that when the times comes you are ready to move into the next chapter.

My Advent devotions this year opened with this writing from Jan L Richardson that I think is fitting for us:

The season of Advent means there is something on the horizon the likes of which we have never seen before. It is not possible to keep it from coming, because it will. That's just how Advent works. What is possible is to not see it, to miss it, to turn just as it brushes past you. And you begin to grasp what it was you missed, like Moses in the cleft of the rock, watching God's hindquarters fade in the distance.

So stay. Sit. Linger. Ponder. Wait. Behold. Wonder.

There will be time enough for running. For rushing. For worrying. For pushing.

For now, stay. Wait.

Something is on the horizon.

Walking Success

Thank you to our 2015 Crop Walk team under the leadership of Art Lipman, with Kristen Curlee, Cheryl Falcone, Tim'Myiah, Richard Lee, Siza Ntshakala, Susan Peters, Lisa Peterson, Peter Rich, Carolyn Richar, Laura Wells, and Kristen and Jake Wheeler joining the team. Team Bethel raised \$6,425. Thank you to all who have sponsored a walker. This money goes to help hungry people around the world through Church World Services while a quarter of it stays right here in Arlington to support Arlington Food Assistance Center.



Bethel Vision and Mission

Vision

To receive and share Jesus' message of extravagant love through compassionate care for our community and the world.

Mission

- We seek to know God and one another and open ourselves to be known.
- We seek to be a church where people are comforted, encouraged, and challenged by God's Word.
- We seek to be God's hands of mercy, affirming justice and peace in the world.
- We welcome and celebrate the diversity of people and thought, encouraging an individual's relationship with Christ.

A question that often comes up is "What are we going to do with this, when and if we adopt it?" Well, there are several things. First and foremost, it is a guide to us, the members of Bethel. It is like the star the wise men followed that led them to Bethlehem, so that even when life's challenges pop up it keeps us oriented as the wind and rain buffet us. It says this is where God has called us to go and what Jesus would have us do. Secondly, the Consistory

and Long Range Planning Committee have discussed putting the entire statement on our website. That way, as new members of the community seek information about Bethel, this short statement tells them who we are and what the essence of our congregation is. There are other potential "next steps" as well. Our various committees can use pieces of the vision and mission that speak to their expertise and role in Bethel; we might distill the vision down to key phrases to use on our bulletins. Once we have adopted a vision and mission, then we will come together to determine the best ways to use it and "put it out there."

Over time, as Bethel grows and evolves certainly the vision and mission might as well. The work above based on an earlier version produced by our church a number of years ago. In this regard, we are not "trapped" or "confined" by our vision. Instead it is a tool to help us be intentional and conscious as a community to think about where God is calling us to focus and how His spirit moves us as a family to share Jesus' love with the world.

Online Giving



If you are a regular visitor to Bethel UCC's website (www.bethelucc-va.org), you may have noticed that Online Giving is now operational. It allows members and friends the option of keeping up with those pledges and giving regularly even if you cannot make it to church every Sunday.

As you click through you will enter a secure portal where you can give on a regular basis or for special collections. You will enter checking account information and your account will be debited for the amount and at the frequency you specify.

More information will be available in the future but it is easy to use so give it a try.

Sound Board Specialist Needed

No experience necessary! We are looking for one more person to learn how to run the soundboard when we have 5 Sundays in the month and to help with some special services like Christmas Eve, weddings, funerals, etc. Join this great team:

Thabo - First Sunday

Cheryl - Second Sunday

Peter/Kristen W - 3rd/4th Sundays

Talk with Peter Rich if you are interested.

How You Can Make a Difference This Christmas With a Small Gift!

In San Luis Talpa, El Salvador - Maria has 2 small children and a spouse, Juan, who cannot find any regular work – so they survive off of \$20-\$30 a week. Eating only 1-2 meals a day – with most meals consisting of a corn tortilla, a small piece of cheese and a piece of mango (when in season), the family has nothing left over to pay for any medical care.

So when Abram or Julietta is running a high fever and crying in pain, Maria has no money to buy any Tylenol or take the children to a doctor. Bethel UCC, pairing our efforts with La Luz Verdadera, has made it possible for Maria, Abram, Julietta and Juan to get regular check-ups and a doctor's visit when one of them is ill – they can even receive small amounts of over the counter medicines to help ease pain or antibiotics for an infection.



We make this possible at Bethel both by donations to pay the salary of Dr. Lissette Alfaro, a Salvadoran doctor who staffs the Faro De Luz medical clinic in San Luis Talpa El Salvador and by donations of over the counter medications and vitamins. We have been fortunate to have some generous donors in the past who gave on a monthly basis and/or left a gift for Faro de Luz clinic in their wills. We are now close to exhausting this reserve fund.

We are challenged to maintain the clinic and could use the help of those who would donate on a regular basis in whatever amount they wish. A donation of \$5 covers the cost of a doctor's visit and over the counter medications. A donation of \$35 covers the daily salary cost for Dr. Lissette. If we could build up a group of 23 families each willing to donate \$35 a month, we would be able to provide for Dr. Lissette's salary.

Would you donate \$5 a month – or \$35 – or any amount that you feel called to give to Faro De Luz Clinic? You would be making a big difference for the children, the elderly and fami-

lies in El Salvador who cannot afford primary health care. Donations are made to Bethel UCC with a memo note for Faro De Luz clinic – and are tax deductible.



Please direct any questions to Pastor Carolyn Richar – carolynsrichar@hotmail.com.

Arlington Food Assistance Center

What a month! Thanks to your generosity we collected 61 boxes of cereal in November bringing us within 39 boxes of our 2015 goal of 600. We can do it! Please continue to bring low sugar breakfast cereals to Bethel for AFAC.

There are so many ways to support AFAC. We are looking for baggers to join us Friday Dec. 4th for dinner at 6 pm at Boston Market (Glebe Road and Columbia Pike) followed by bagging at 7:15 pm.

Alternative Giving Market

When children at school told me that Santa Claus wasn't real and I went crying home to my mother, she explained to me that Santa Claus was the Spirit of Giving. As long, she said, as people were willing to give to others in the world, Santa Claus was alive and well.

Here at Bethel, Santa Claus is kept alive and well through our Alternative Gift Market. Each year, we offer you the opportunity to give a gift that will benefit someone in need instead of just adding more stuff to the pile in yours or someone else's home. The Alternative Gift Market works with three different charities and allows you to give in your own name or in the name of someone else.

First, the Gift Market works with Church World Services where you can donate to provide seeds or tools for gardening, literacy classes and small business grants, or emergency food packets. Your donations travel around the world improving the lives of adults and children in places of need.

Secondly, the Gift Market works with our ministry of supporting the El Salvador

Clinic. Bethel supports the doctor's salary there of \$600/month.

Finally, the Gift Market also works with our support of children's ministry friend Joshua through the Arlington Academy of Hope. Bethel currently sponsors his elementary education at \$360/year, and we hope to continue to support his education through high school.

Please join us in supporting these wonderful charities this year at Bethel. We will be collecting donations during Fellowship time on December 6th, 13th, and 20th.

Christmas Pageant!

Bethel's annual Intergenerational Christmas pageant returns on Sunday, December 20th during our 10 a.m. worship. No rehearsal necessary, just come and join in the telling of this sacred story of Jesus' birth.

DECEMBER: SAVE THE DATES!

Let's celebrate the season with our ecumenical partnership, Arlington Forest United Methodist Church and Arlington Church of the Brethren:

- Join us on Sunday, December 13th at 6:30 p.m. at Arlington Forest UMC for dinner, Christmas carols and a visit from St. Nicholas. There is something for everyone!
- Community worship will be held Sunday, December 27th at 10 a.m. at Arlington Forest UMC.

december 2015

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
		1 World AIDS Day	2 7 p.m. Bible Study	3	4	5
6 10 a.m. Worship & Sunday School 11 a.m. Congregational Meeting & Pot-luck	7	8	9 7 p.m. Bible Study	10	11	12
13 10 a.m. Worship & Sunday School 11 a.m. Fellowship 11:30 Consistory 6:30 St. Nick's Night Arlington Forest	14	15	16 7 p.m. Bible Study	17 12 p.m. Third Thursday	18	19
20 10 a.m. Worship and Christmas Pageant 11 a.m. Fellowship	21	22	23	24 7 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship	25	26
27 10 a.m. Worship at Arlington Forest	28	29	30	31		