Cribbs-Notes

In the fourth and final quarter of 2021, we may be amazed by how quickly this year is fading. It doesn’t seem that long ago when I packed my belongings, shut down my home, and drove across the country from California to Virginia. The process of moving was not new to me, a nomad, who has lived in more than 20 cities in the United States and traveled to and through more than 40 countries. But this was a very different and special experience. Since arriving at Little River United Church of Christ, I have discovered an incredible community of faithful people with diverse religious expressions, theologies, and spiritual identities. Little River is a special gift and valuable congregation.

During this emphatic adventure into transitional pastoral leadership, we have grown together and experienced a variety of discoveries and insights about ourselves, individually and collectively. We have ventured into a process that examines our understanding of faith and community. We have reached into the depths of who we are and who we are becoming as a congregation through our Sacred Listening Circles. We opened ourselves to be free and vulnerable in an effort to discover where we are going as the Body of Christ, individually and collectively.

To be perfectly clear, this is not an easy journey. It requires honesty, integrity, compassion, and patience. We are propelled by prayer and our trust in God to guide us through a protracted process of review and discovery. We are building a foundation to sustain our congregation deep into the future. We are acting deliberately without rushing but refusing to lag behind or prolong the tough and exciting work we must do together.

As your interim senior pastor, I am responsible for leading the congregation through this period of transition without prejudice. Fortunately, I did not come to Little River UCC with any preconceived notions about what is needed or any desire to change or remake the congregation into my design of a faithful community. Instead, my arrival offered an opportunity for me to work with this precious church and encourage every person and family to participate more fully in the numerous ministries, auxiliaries, boards, committees, and activities offered and available here at Little River. The real joy and glory of it all is to witness the sincerity, commitment, and wonderful participation by so many members and persons who attend our church and programs.

Little River is a special blessing in the lives of people who walk through its doors and many others who benefit from its generosity and dedication to address the needs of others, including strangers and people we may never meet. We are a diverse congregation with a spirit of openness and hospitality. We are a very blessed church with vast resources, including the expanse of our church grounds and the presence of a pre-school on our campus. We give thanks to God for the blessings bestowed upon us and every occasion to extend ourselves beyond ourselves.

To be clear, we have the twin reality of challenges and opportunities cast in front of us. We are grounded in faith with the audacity to believe in the possibility of doing far more than what we know or have previously experienced. We believe in hope, grace, and mercy. We believe in the possibility of overcoming the impossible and achieving more than we’ve ever done and going beyond the limits of our previous experiences.

I want to invite you to become fully involved in this special, precious period of transition. Let’s work together, diligently, to be the Body of Christ in a world starving to know God even better.

—Pastor Art
**Interim Process & Moderator Update**

This fall, we are moving forward in the interim time with intentionality and purpose. We have now completed the Sacred Listening Circle process and shared the outcomes at the October 3rd Congregational Meeting. Below is a summary of the presentation that was shared at the meeting, including the outcomes, the corresponding recommendations, and action steps. The interim team identified three areas for improvement: structural changes, difficulties we have had as a community, and behavioral issues such as how we treat each other and the staff.

**Structural concerns include:**
- Lack of transparency
- Lack of communication
- Not hearing back, lack of responsiveness
- Things happened behind closed doors
- Silos – boards and committees are not connected
- Not knowing what happened

**Key Recommendations:** Improve communication (leadership, council, boards, and committees): follow through with communication. Include the church community in major decision making. Embrace the UCC/congregational tradition.

**Action Items:** Ensure transparency and communication: establish a secure place (online) for sharing board and committee information; hold quarterly congregational meetings.

**Community Concerns:**
- Members unwilling to serve on boards or committees because of negative experiences
- Lots of pet projects and strong opinions
- Demanding that we must get our own way
- Cliques/exclusivity
- Conflict is left unresolved

**Key Recommendations:** Be a Christian community: focus on faith and increase Christian Education; teach about the UCC and live into our faith traditions; create intergenerational, community, and small group activities; ensure that boards and committees operate in a Christian way.

**Behavioral Concerns**
- Quick to criticize the staff and members/volunteers
- Microaggressions
- Gossip
- Conflict that is unresolved
- Staff and members leaving
- Bullying – instances of yelling at staff or other members
- Enacting white privilege

**Key Recommendations:** Create a safe place for all: focus from within on our church culture; create a sense of belonging for all and emotional safety; enact an extravagant welcome; create a culture of gratitude and communicate gratitude to staff and volunteers.

**Action Items:** Collaboratively establish a covenant of behavior in the church bylaws: include Matthew 17:20; include feedback session for church members; this would be part of new-members classes in the future; use restorative justice practices to resolve conflict.

While this is troubling, understanding and addressing our current state moves us forward as long as we take action to address our challenges. We can and will do better as a church community. During the months of October and November, we will continue to focus on healing, confession, and forgiveness. During this time, there will be a box in the sanctuary for sacred confession or prayer or reflection. Now is a great time to consider how we can all do better, be better, and engage as a Christian community. Starting in December and the new year, our efforts will turn toward the search for a new settled senior pastor. For a complete copy of the Congregational Meeting minutes from October 3rd or with questions, please contact moderator@lrucc.org.

**Help with Worship**

The Board of Deacons invites members and friends of the congregation to assist in leading worship by volunteering to be a greeter, liturgist, usher, or Thanksgiving and Concerns reporter and/or note taker on Sunday mornings during worship service. To sign up to volunteer, email deaconlist@lrucc.org or call the church office.
Reconciliation Sunday

This year Little River is setting aside a special time to bring forward the worries, concerns, and unfinished issues that clog our lives. Life is an experience with faith. We honor the Creator in worship and service to people beyond ourselves. Amid all the various things we do, we make mistakes. We fall short and sometimes we stumble. No matter what we do or happens to us, we have the assurance of God’s mercy.

On Sunday, November 21, we invite you to bring the weight of your life to the sanctuary and release whatever burdens you are carrying. Also, come with a spirit of Thanksgiving and express your gratitude for the marvelous things God has done for you. We will share in a moment of reconciliation, healing, and renewal.

Whether you are online or in the sanctuary, our worship will focus on the many things for which we are thankful and those issues and concerns that give us pause. Please plan to join us as we offer ourselves to God with the faith we are never forgotten or forsaken.

Neighbors in Need Offering

Each year Little River participates in five special offerings with the broader United Church of Christ. We invite you to support the Neighbors in Need offering through November 14 with a gift online, in worship during the offering, or by mail to the church office. Please indicate “Neighbors in Need” in the memo if you use a check.

In 2021, Neighbors in Need “Unfailing Love” offering is focused on supporting organizations and projects that are serving homeless and immigrant neighbors or communities. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC’s Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to provide funding grants to UCC churches and organizations leading justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects in their communities.

Come Ring Bells

The handbell choir welcomes new members—previous experience not required! Join us for fellowship, fun, and music making. Find Craig following the Sunday worship or email craig@lrucc.org.

Upcoming Memorial Services

During the first weekend in November, we will gather for services to celebrate the life of two Little River members who passed away during the pandemic: Bill Hartzler and Donald Wallace. All are welcome at the services (please follow LR’s COVID protocols) or you may join via Zoom. For more information about Zoom links and where to make memorial gifts, please contact the church office.

- Service for Bill Hartzler
  Saturday, November 6 – 11:30 a.m.
- Service for Donald Wallace
  Sunday, November 7 – 2:00 p.m.

Book Group

Last Book for 2021

The Yellow House tells the story of one family, their yellow shotgun house, and their corner of New Orleans, America’s most mythological and deeply divided city—over the course of the twentieth century. The discussion will be Sunday November 14, at 12 p.m. More information on meeting location coming soon.

Next Year

For those interested in participating in next year’s book group, please submit your ideas for next year’s reads!

What began as a women’s reading group many years ago has expanded in past years to include all adults. The group would also welcome young adults who are interested.

Please give the title, the author, and what type of book (fiction, non-fiction and a sub-category is also helpful—mystery, memoir, etc.). Also, tell us in two or three paragraphs (preferably your own words) about a book you are recommending to the group for 2022. It is helpful to know when it was published and if it is available in paperback or ebook as well.

Send your nominations to Jean Wheelock (wheelocks@verizon.net) by November 7.

Time Change

Remember to “fall back” one hour before coming to church (or Zoom!) on November 7!
Council Summary

During its October meeting, Council reviewed the results of the Sacred Listening Circles, focusing on the action items generated by that important process and the congregational meeting feedback. Two small ad hoc committees were created to 1) gather information and present proposals on codes of conduct or board norms for all committee meetings and 2) suggest changes to Little River’s board and committee structure with an eye toward streamlining and efficiency. These proposals will be presented at the November Council meeting. The Deacons are gathering examples of covenants of Christian behavior for church members that are used by other congregations and will present their recommendations to Council.

Also in response to the Sacred Listening Circles, Council discussed ways to address disagreements among committee and board members and how to provide greater transparency into Council, board, and committee discussions and decisions. A summary of each Council meeting, such as this one, will be published in each issue of Currents. We will resume publication of highlights of committee and board meetings in the weekly worship service bulletins, as was done prior to the suspension of in-person worship. We are looking at secure ways to share Council and committee minutes with all members of the congregation.

Endowment Fund Committee Update

At the Endowment Fund Committee meeting in July, spending levels for 2022 were set. The committee sets these levels in accordance with the policy approved by the congregation on October 23, 2016. For 2022, $244,000 total will be disbursed from the Endowment Fund. Per the policy document, 20% or $4,800 will be available for the operating budget, 10% or $2,400 for scholarships, 40% or $9,600 for outreach, and 30% or $7,200 for innovative ministries or capital projects. If you have a proposal for the innovative ministries or capital project funds, please send it to the Endowment Fund Committee at endowment@lrucc.org.

Steinway Piano Update

Thank you again to the congregation for supporting the Steinway Piano Refurbishment Fund! Our piano technician, Eliot Freese, is ordering the parts necessary to rebuild the action and begin work on the piano. Around Thanksgiving, the piano will move out of the sanctuary to Eliot’s workshop. There it will receive an overhaul of the action, replacement of the strings and hammers, and repairs to the casework. The piano will return to the sanctuary once the repairs are complete, possibly around Easter. Since the repairs are quite extensive, the typical time frame for this kind of work is 6–12 months. LRUCC will welcome the piano next year with a musical celebration.

Meditation Group

The Little River Meditation Group meets every Sunday via Zoom during this time of social distancing. All are welcome to join in at 9 a.m. as the group explores meditation as a contemplative practice that helps to quiet the mind. Meetings will end at 9:50 a.m., just in time for participants to make it to the online worship services. Below is the information to join the meeting. Questions? Contact Sallyanne Harper at Saharperi@verizon.net.

Flower Donation

Have you noticed the beautiful flowers in the sanctuary for worship services? If you would like to give flowers on the Sunday of your choice on a first-come basis, you may email office@lrucc.org. Please include in your email address, the date you would like to give flowers, and a dedication (in honor, in celebration, or in memory) you would like to have listed in the bulletin. If you would like a certain type of flower, you can contact Ms. Ruth Duncan at 703-944-4874. The flowers typically cost between $75 and $100; the amount of your check is at your discretion. Please make a check payable to Little River United Church of Christ, and designate “Flower Fund” on the memo line.
Rally Day

Rally Day in early September gave families an opportunity to gather in-person on the church grounds for the first time since the end-of-school party in June. The PYF (grades 6-12) entertained the younger children of the church with a variety of outside activities, including making giant soap bubbles, drawing with chalk, a spoon race, a water balloon toss and much more. The PYF also enjoyed playing Four Square and the younger children played a bowling game in the parking lot.

During this time, parents met with members of the Board of Christian Education to craft a plan for in-person Sunday school. A clear preference was made for an outdoor program during the church hour. Christian Education volunteers immediately stepped up to make that happen with Sunday School on the patio which started the next week and has been running continuously ever since!

PYF currently uses the same hour to hold its monthly book club meetings, and earlier this month, helped organize the food pantry as a service project.

In-Person Sunday School

Where did we start? At the beginning, with the creation story, which led to great chalk designs of animals, boats, rainbows, etc. We are generally holding classes outside and are considering moving indoors, depending on parents’ comfort levels. We hope others will return. Right now, we have a one-classroom type of approach, but we’ll branch out as needed as more children and youth express interest.

If you think your family is ready for in-person church school—please reach out and let us know! CE@lrucc.org.

Calling Sunday School Teachers & Kids

Sunday school has resumed after more than a year of only virtual church. Children and teachers have been meeting on the patio during the worship service each Sunday for lessons, crafts, and music with Ms Ashton. Everyone is having a great time, glad to be back together, and growing in faith.

Please consider helping lead this important part of our kids’ lives! Volunteer for one week, a month, or days here-and-there as your schedule permits. Visit the Sign-up Genius page to see dates and a list of lesson plans: www.bit.ly/LR-teach.

If you have questions or would like to sign-up without using your computer, email Emily Makos at ejmingus@gmail.com.

Remembering Loved Ones

On November 7, we will offer prayers of thanksgiving for loved ones who have died during the past 12 months. We invite you to contribute the names of family members and close friends whose loss you mourn. Please email office@lrucc.org or call the church office at 703-978-3060 with the name of the individual and your relationship to that person. Information will be collected through noon on Wednesday, November 3.
Update from the Board of Trustees

The LRUCC Board of Trustees has four areas of responsibility which include the following:

- Use of the Church Building by the LRUCC Community and External Groups
- Maintenance of the Church Building and Grounds
- Office Operations; Computers, Internet and Telecommunications; Building Security
- Church Budget and Finances and Insurance

This article provides an update on recent Board of Trustees actions in each of these four areas. 2021 continues to be a very busy year for the Board.

Building Use. We’ll start with building use because perhaps the most significant Trustee action of the year is that LRUC building is open and available for use by LRUC members and internal groups! Masks are required and other COVID precautions are in place such as no food preparation in kitchen, but the building is available and worship services have returned to the Sanctuary. In support of hybrid worship, the Board of Trustees and LRUC member donors purchased and installed new lighting in the chancel of the Sanctuary. This makes the streaming video of worship brighter and clearer, and it greatly improves the previous dim lighting in the Sanctuary at night and on cloudy days.

The Annandale Cooperative Preschool resumed classes 5 days per week in September and Scout Troop 1532 has resumed meeting indoors. Church school and PYF continue to meet outdoors as long as the weather permits, but will move indoors and space out appropriately throughout the church building when it becomes necessary to do so. The Board of Trustees purchased eight large portable air cleaners and filters to increase air circulation in interior spaces when they are occupied. These can be moved to various spaces as needed: Sanctuary, Social Hall, Meeting Rooms, Choir Room, Jubilee Room. Please contact John Davis for assistance using the air cleaners.

LRUC entered into a new cleaning contract with Coverall, Inc. The church is currently cleaned two days per week, which will increase to three or more days per week as needed. The Annandale Cooperative Preschool rooms are deep cleaned five times per week.

Building and Grounds Maintenance. The Board of Trustees wishes to thank all 22 volunteers who came out for the Outdoor Clean-up Day on Saturday, September 11. There were 11 volunteers from LRUC and 11 from Troop 1532, and all helped spruce up the grounds before the 9/11 Memorial Service and the Worship Service on Sunday. The next Outdoor Work Day is scheduled for December 4 for leaf clean-up.

In the meantime, the Trustees do have some exterior painting tasks that they would like to accomplish while the weather is ideal for outdoor painting. Some of the exterior doors and the railings on the brick wall in the courtyard need to be repainted. If you would like to help with these painting tasks, please e-mail Bill Huddleston at Billhuddleston1@gmail.com or phone or text him at 703-434-9780.

Dead and dying trees continue to be a problem on the Church grounds. Two additional dead trees were felled in September, one along the preschool safety path on the perimeter of the parking lot and one near the property boundary that threatened a neighbor’s home. The Board of Trustees prioritizes tree work based on threat to the church building, playground and patio, neighboring property, and the driveway/parking lot.

In August, LRUC undertook major repairs of the soffits below the roof overhangs and the rake boards below the roof. Holes in soffit and sagging soffits were repaired. (There were five areas where birds were entering and nesting under the eaves.) The wooden rake boards above the Sanctuary windows and the back of the church were cracking and deteriorating and these areas were covered with dark brown aluminum cladding. Since this work was completed, additional soffit repair needs were identified, which will be completed before the end of the year.

Sanctuary Windows: Rake Board Repair

Some good news is that the pitched, shingled roof over the Sanctuary and narthex was inspected this summer and found to need some repair, but not replacement. The Board of Trustees is awaiting a proposal for the necessary roof repairs and plans to complete this work as soon as possible. We expect this will extend the life of the pitched, shingled roof for several more years.

Other pending building maintenance issues include replacement of the heating and air conditioning unit in Classroom 6 which failed in August. A contract has been signed to install a new unit but supply delays mean the unit will not be replaced until late November. The Board of Trustees is currently working on replacement of the Fire Alarm Control Panel and upgrade
of church fire alarm system to current fire/building code. The Fire Alarm Control Panel was installed in 1997 and has reached the end of its useful life. Trustees are currently seeking detailed proposals from both Johnson Controls and H&H Fire Protection Services. This is a high priority issue for late 2021 into 2022 and will likely be a major expense, as yet undetermined. Another pending issue is restaining the exterior wood siding of the church and painting of rusting exterior doors in the back and sides of the building. The Board of Trustees is in the process of obtaining estimates for this work, but may defer until 2022.

Office Operations, Computers & IT, Building Security, Telecommunications, Church Finances, Budget and Insurance. The Board of Trustees continues to be responsible for all of these areas, but it is the excellent staff of LRUCG who truly keep things running: Kathy Heyman, office administrator; John Davis and Nick Renzo, sextons; and LuAnn Bynum, bookkeeper. Kathy is on the front line for welcoming visitors, responding to building use and meeting requests, and operating issues with office equipment. LuAnn pays the bills, keeps LRUCG accounts in order, and the budget on track. John and Nick handle computer, network, and phone systems maintenance, responding to fire and security alarms, power outages, maintenance of entry doors, and fire safety inspections.

The Board of Trustees cannot say enough on behalf of the LRUCG community to express our appreciation to Kathy, John, Nick, and LuAnn for their dedication and service to LRUCG. Next time you are at the church because it is open for you, stop into the office or find John and Nick to say, “Hi” and “Thanks!”

Spiral Walk

Save the date! The Women’s Ministry will offer the Spiral Walk again this Advent on Sunday, December 5, late in the afternoon. More details will follow.

Neighbor to Neighbor

Welcoming New Immigrants

Homework Club has a new name: Neighbor to Neighbor! ACCA, the source of our grant money, has told us that our previous name no longer describes the work we’re doing. Those leaders were right.

We are grateful for all the support Little River and the other three churches are giving these families. Thanks go to the Board of Outreach and Social Justice (BO&J) for support and to Kathy Heyman for receiving gift cards. Although some newcomers have assets in Afghanistan, they can’t access their frozen bank accounts; others arrive with fewer resources. We are thrilled that a business donated twenty-five laptops to us to distribute. In addition, we have boxes of contributions such as household items, personal supplies, and kitchen ware.

In addition to our September Meet and Greet outdoor gathering, we held another event for networking and conversational groups, and had to cancel another because of transportation problems and iffy weather. On October 23, we sent children home with Halloween treats. Peace Lutheran has given the go-ahead for indoor gatherings capped at fifty people when the weather becomes cold. Eleven new family groups and individuals have arrived to be registered and to seek help.

One of our Afghan consultants tested new arrivals for English proficiency and has begun two levels of English instruction. He is in Albania right now, having helped ninety of his compatriots leave Afghanistan and settle into a transit camp. Even so, he has conducted his classes via Zoom. The other consultant has begun her English conversation circle for women.

In the meantime, we are beginning the process of matching volunteers with individuals and families for English practice and/or mentoring.

One of our biggest challenges is transportation. Most families don’t have cars so we rely on volunteers to drive them to and from the church. This entails last minute sign-ups or cancellations from families, car seats to be installed and removed, as well as reluctance of volunteers to drive—perhaps because of COVID. We are hoping Uber and Lyft can help take up the slack.

If anyone has questions, please be in touch with me. Things change rapidly, so today’s information might become altered tomorrow! Thank you again for your support.

—Janet Parsons Mackey, j.parsmack@gmail.com
### Counting Our September 2021 Blessings

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<tr>
<th>September Giving Report</th>
<th>Special Offerings (Year to Date)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gifts (September)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gifts Budget</td>
<td>UCC Offerings</td>
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#### OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

**Join the Board of Trustees**

Did you know that the LRUCC’s building and grounds are a key component of our church’s outreach? Did you know that, even though we are still in the midst of a pandemic, the church building and grounds are in use by someone or some group nearly seven days a week, 52 weeks of the year? It takes many hands and many talents to keep our building and grounds in good shape so that our church assets can be instruments to serve our community and the wider world. And, the potential for the future is huge! What more can we do with our 12 acres of land and our building to serve others?

By joining the Board of Trustees or serving on the LRUCC Financial Team, you can have a direct role in this physical manifestation of LRUCC’s ministry. Little River UCC has several openings on the Board of Trustees. We would love to have you join us to help support LRUCC’s ministry to our church community, our neighbors, and the wider world.

The Board of Trustees has a wide range of responsibilities, so we are looking for new members who have a variety of skills and interests.

- Building Maintenance
- Grounds Maintenance
- Church Office Operations including the church computers, network, phone and security systems
- Use of the Church Building
- Church Finance and Budgeting

The Board of Trustees meets via Zoom on the third Tuesday of each month from 7 to 9 p.m. For more information, please contact Robin Petrusak, Chair, at rpetrusak@yahoo.com or Ellen Wertman of Nominations and Appointments at nanda@lrucc.org or ellenw72@gmail.com.

**Serve as Assistant Treasurer**

The Board of Trustees is seeking an Assistant Treasurer who will work closely during 2022 with the LRUCC Treasurer with the expectation that the Assistant Treasurer will serve as Treasurer for 2023. The Assistant Treasurer is appointed by the Board of Trustees and later recommended as a candidate for Treasurer. The Assistant Treasurer will have authority to sign checks and will learn how to transfer funds between various LRUCC accounts, including the Endowment Fund. The Assistant Treasurer will be part of the church Finance Team and will work closely with the church bookkeeper, the Treasurer, the Comptroller, the chair of the Board of Trustees, and the chair of the Endowment Committee. The Finance Team currently meets monthly via Zoom. The Assistant Treasurer and other members of the Finance Team also assist with signing checks prepared by the bookkeeper, recording monies received and making deposits, so periodic visits to the church are required for this position. Currently, LRUCC has no Assistant Treasurer; the chair of the Board of Trustees has been serving in that capacity.

For more information, please contact Robin Petrusak, Trustees Chair, at rpetrusak@yahoo.com or Carolyn Yocom at cyocom93@gmail.com.

**Greet Worshipers on Sunday**

Please sign up for a Sunday. Arrive at 9:20 a.m., with a smile on your face and greet the people coming for the service. There are no meetings; just a smile needed! The sign-up sheet for Front Door Greeters for Sunday worship services can be found on the bulletin board in the atrium. Any questions or for more information, contact Bunny Jones at 703-218-9888 or email mbjones@cox.net. Thank you!
Pilgrim Youth Fellowship

Little River’s PYF is a group of dynamic and engaged youth who participate in the life of the church through a variety of activities designed to promote fun, faith, and fellowship. Open to all youth in grades 6-12, PYF offers several programs each month, including a movie night, a fun outing, a book club, and a service opportunity.

Recent activities included service at the 2021 Rally Day. By entertaining the younger grades with outdoor games, the PYF enabled parents to participate in a meeting to help craft the plan for a successful Sunday school program while addressing concerns about COVID-19 safety for unvaccinated age-groups. In the future we hope to go ice skating, clean up a park, climb on a ropes course, and more. For more information or to volunteer as an advisor or safe-church assistant, contact Sarah Wilbur at dhakamedic@hotmail.com.

Volunteer for the Media Team

If you are interested in helping our staff run Sunday service via Zoom and have a passion for media or technology, volunteer for the new Worship Media Team by emailing office@lrucc.org.

Staff

The Rev. Dr. Arthur L. Cribbs, Jr. (619) 948-1777
Interim Senior Pastor pastorart@lrucc.org

Craig Stapert craig@lrucc.org
Director of Music and Communications

Ashton Streavig ashton@lrucc.org
Children and Youth Choir Director

Kathy Heyman kathy@lrucc.org
Office Administrator

John Davis john@lrucc.org
Sexton/First Friday Coordinator

New Communications Coordinator

We are pleased to announce that we have filled the Communications Coordinator position with a seasoned, internal candidate. Craig Stapert is taking on the combined role of Director of Music and Communications Coordinator. While we are all familiar with Craig’s gifts creating, arranging, and organizing instrumental and choral performances, he has worked professionally in development and communications for non-profit and religious organizations. Combining these positions allows Craig to be a full time staff member of LRUCC. Please generously share your support with Craig.

Pool Party Kick-Off.
The PYF ended the summer with a splash! Youth met for a pool party and to plan events for the coming year.

The PYF (for youth in grades 6-12) offers a monthly movie night. The first event was held on September 17. In October, the youth watched Secondhand Lions. In October, the youth watched Secondhand Lions. Stay tuned for future dates and movies!
The Potomac Association of the Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ presents this Resolution of Witness for consideration and adoption by the Central Atlantic Conference 57th Annual Meeting October 12-16, 2021. The Conference voted in favor of adopting the resolution.

**United Church of Christ Witnessing**

“A White Supremacism Free Zone”

1 Leviticus 19.4 says, “Do not turn to idols or make cast images for yourselves: I am the Lord your God.”

2 We exist in a world where there is idol worship. An idol is an object made into something of extreme devotion; a person or thing that is declared sacred or holy; a representation of an object or person as something with perceived powers; a false god; something that great reverence is placed upon and is the object of worship. Many things that surround us are idols.

3 For our purposes here we are focused upon the idol called white supremacy. Being white does not possess any inherent superiority other than the superiority that is bestowed upon the concept by force, laws, myth, institutions and ethos. Being white has no power other than the powers maintained through brute force, the establishment of laws and traditions that maintain institutions, and the accepted narratives used to advance and affirm so-called superiority.

4 As people of faith, rooted in the gospel of justice, we are admonished to tear down the idols that keep us from the simple but true worship of God. Jesus teaches his followers, in the wisdom words of old, to “love God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind and to love your neighbor as yourself.” We are taught to strip away the things that hinder us in relating to one another with respect, regard and sacred love. We are being taught to rid ourselves of the idols created by human beings for the purposes of control and power. Racism and white supremacy are some of those idols constructed for the purposes of power and greed.

5 In this historic moment we are faced with the idols of white idolatry, racism, hatred, and greed. Hatred has been nurtured and fostered in these last few years to such a degree that if we thought we were rendering it to a relic of the past we were sorrowfully mistaken. White idolatry has been elevated to levels of such a grave danger, and its worshippers have been aggressively engaged in a crusade to raise up the idols that it is apparent that something must be done differently to challenge white idolatry. We are proposing a witness that will help to challenge the resurgence and comfort of the idolizing of whiteness.

6 “Black Lives Matter” has become a mantra attempting to stir awake the white community and invite non-Black allies to stand in solidarity with the struggles of Blackness, but in spite of the declaration that “Black Lives Matter,” the atrocities
of white Idolatry, racial profiling, and extra-judicial killings continue. Black Lives
Matter banners have been ripped down and vandalized at white houses of
worship, and white idolatrous groups have attacked Black houses of worship for
bearing the banners and these acts makes it apparent that to declare “Black Lives Matter” is not enough!

While we genuinely appreciate expressions of solidarity and witness, whites in all
their liberal and progressive ideology and theology have not effectively
challenged the infrastructure or comfort of white idolatry. It is important that if
white idolatry is to be challenged, given that it is a white problem, whites must put
some skin in the game and take on a different kind of commitment and posture.
Though it is important for non-Black allies to express solidarity, it is more
important that white communities and houses of worship challenge the white
community, and white enclaves with expressions that will bring discomfort, cause
congregations and people to truly grapple with whiteness and white idolatry by
declaring in banners and other public expressions in communities where whites
live and worship that this is “A White Supremacism Free Zone.”

When you think about where United Church of Christ congregations exist, it is
generally in white neighborhoods – suburban, urban and rural – and those white
enclaves where the bulk of UCC congregations exist have a tokenistic color mix
at best. Therefore, for the white community and white congregations to begin the
deconstruction of white idolatry it must be forced into the discussion, making
well-meaning white institutions and people to grapple with their own communities
and the aid and comfort offered to white idolatry. To raise the issue, and to make
the issue not about Blacks but about whites is how white idolatry/supremacy is
challenged and stands any chance of being deconstructed.

This call for houses of worship, white United Church of Christ congregations,
UCC congregations and institutions in general to declare their communities and
settings as “A White Supremacism Free Zone” is to take away the quiet
existence of racism and white idolatry and forces the issue into the communities
in which UCC houses of worship exist. Declaring “We are confronting white
supremacy” and publicly expressed forces the discussion and takes away the
comfortable existence of white idolatry.

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Acknowledgements:

Original authors of resolution as presented to the Potomac Association, April 20, 2021; considered and
adopted May 1, 2021 by vote of the Potomac Association delegation.

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Little River United Church of Christ

Celebrating diversity, independent thought, & faithful action

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Little River United Church of Christ is called by God to celebrate diversity, independent thought, and faithful action by providing the following in our congregation, neighborhood, and world:

1) Nurturing individual and congregational spirituality
2) Serving our community
3) Advocating for all God’s creatures and creation

Approved at Annual Meeting by Congregational Vote on February 7, 2016

Hybrid Worship!

November 7 and 21, youth of the church during the Sunday School time on Sundays. Choir with Ms. Ashton will be offered to the children and Church with Ms. Ashton will be offered to the children and youth of the church during the Sunday School time on Sundays.

Please check with your pastor for location of the class if the weather is not conducive to be outdoors.

Choir will be held in the shade. If the weather allows, the group will be held outside. Worship service will be held outdoors where possible. Worship service will be held outdoors where possible.

NOTE: Children’s Sunday School is now being offered online. Worship will also continue to be offered online via Zoom. Socializing will continue to occur online via Zoom. Coffee hour will continue to be offered online via Zoom. No coffee hour will be offered.

We are excited to start welcoming members and friends back into the sanctuary for in-person worship. We are excited to start welcoming members and friends back into the sanctuary for in-person worship.

Current Reflections is our monthly newsletter to members and friends of Little River United Church of Christ. The latest issue of Current Reflections is our monthly newsletter to members and friends of Little River United Church of Christ.